Vol.24

ROKUDA NOBORU

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THE UNTOUCHABLE HORIZON

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VOL.24
THE UNTOUCHABLE HORIZON

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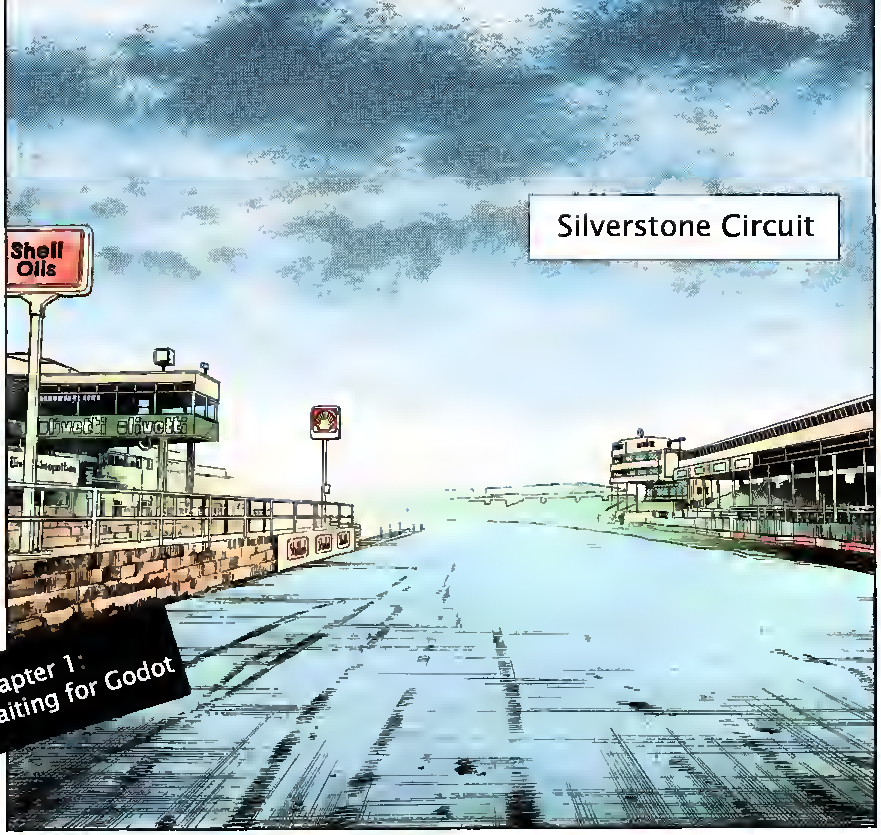
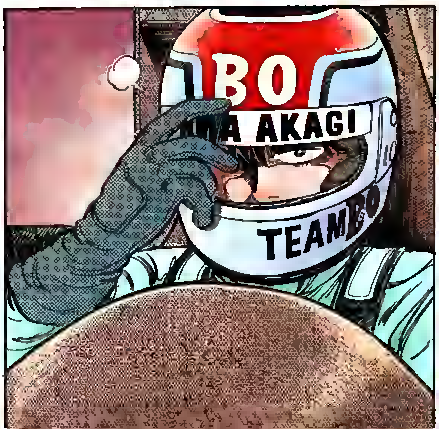
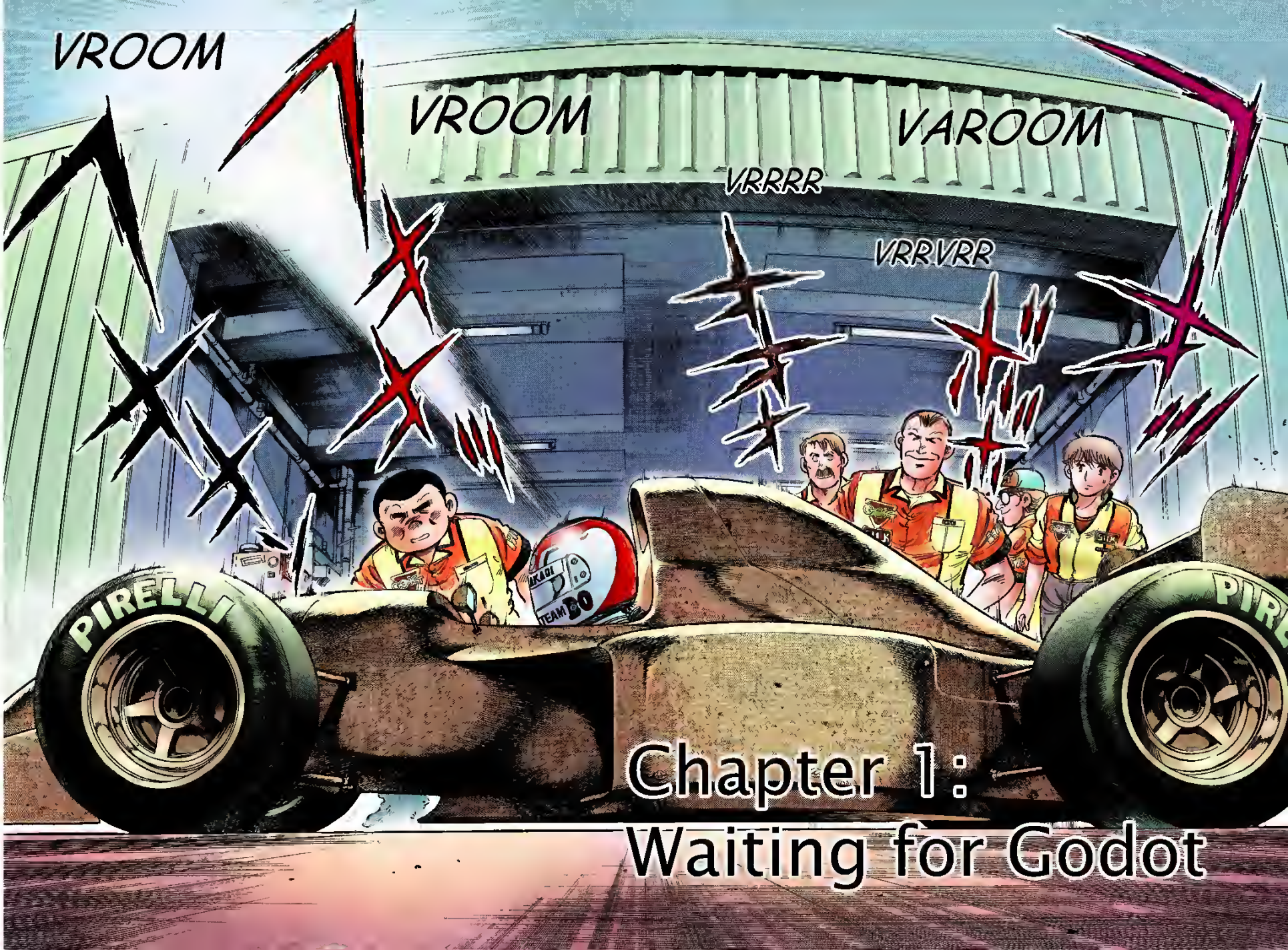
Chapter 6: The Untouchable Horizon
Chapter 7: First-rate
Chapter 8: The Collision
Chapter 9: Crows
Chapter 10: On the Subway
Chapter 11: Fired
Chapter 12: The Pursuit


Shell Oils
Silverstone Circuit
Chapter 1:
Waiting for Godot

TEAMBO


BO
A AKAGI
TEAMBO

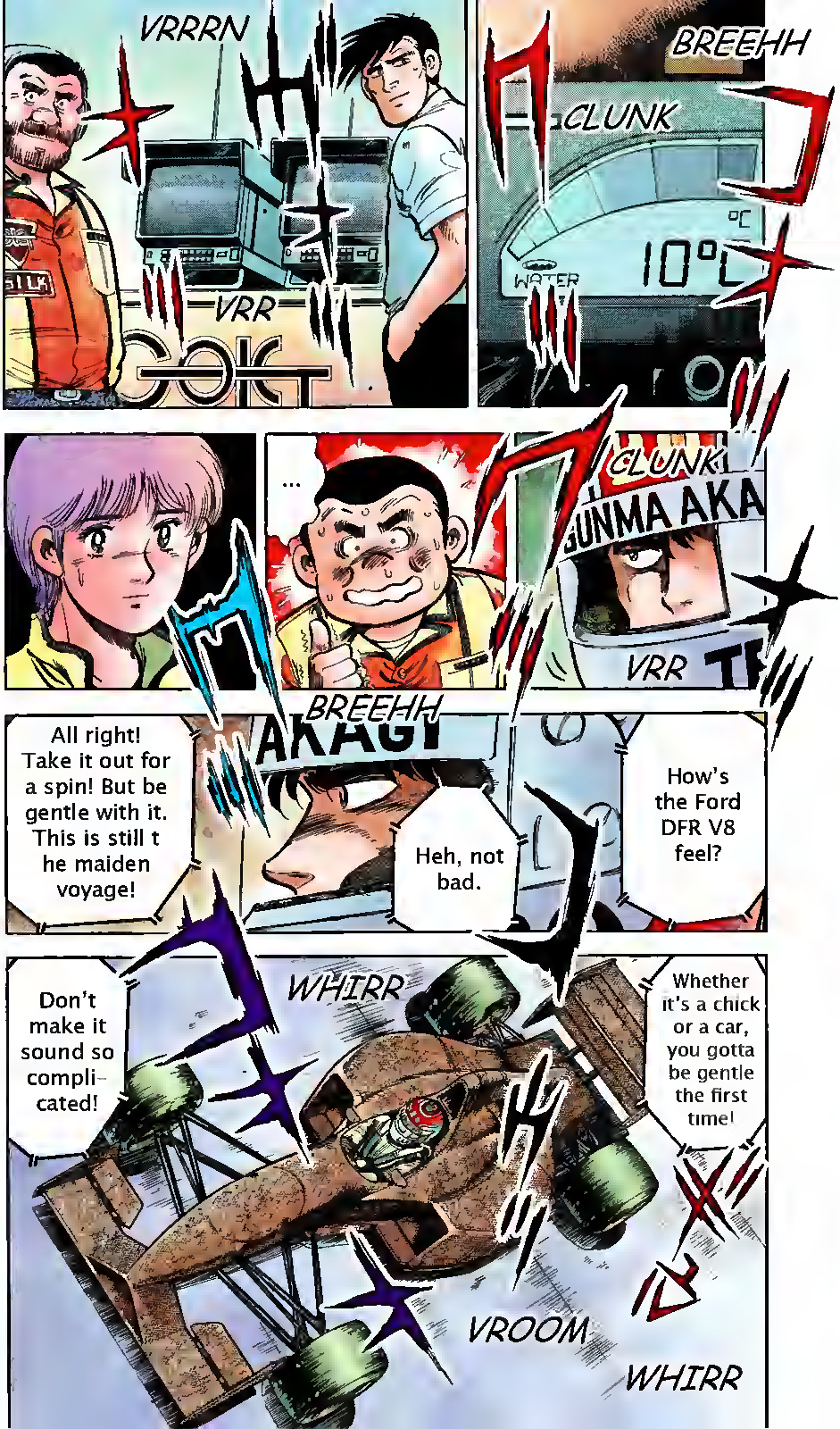
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
ドキ
ドキ
ドキ
ドキ

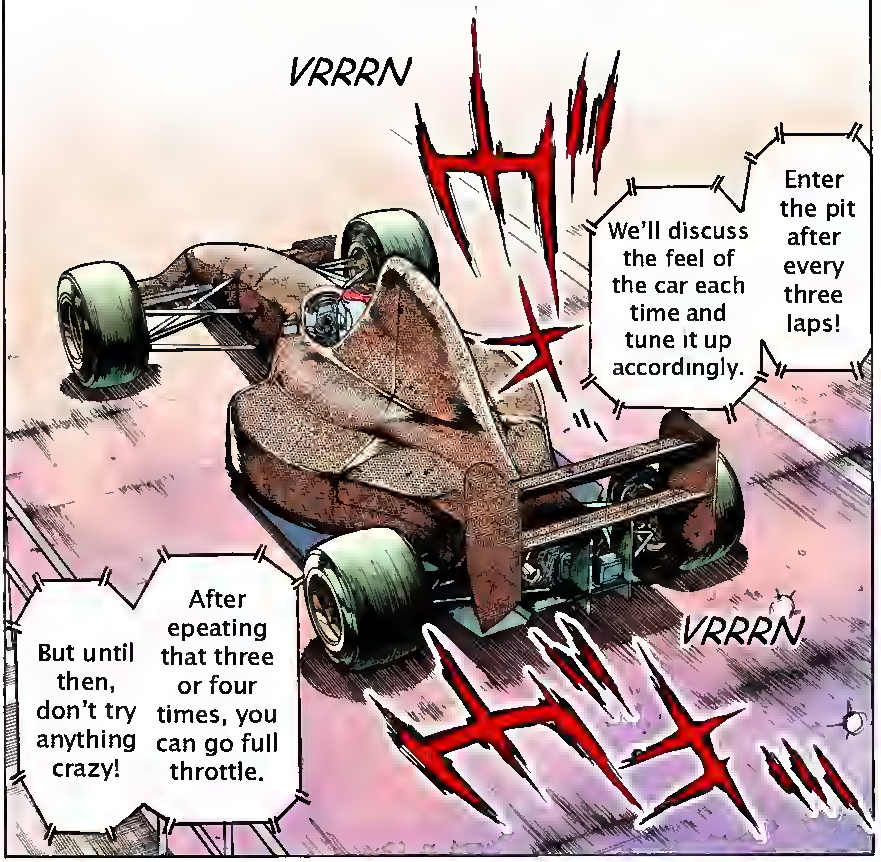


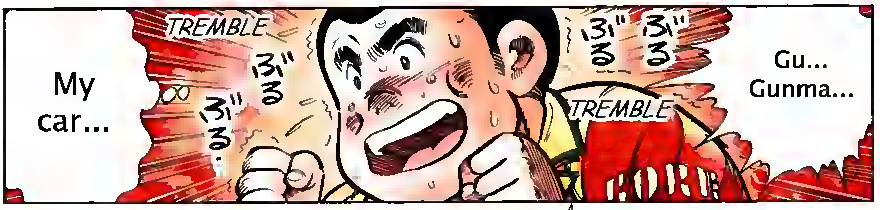
Chapter 1: Waiting for Godot

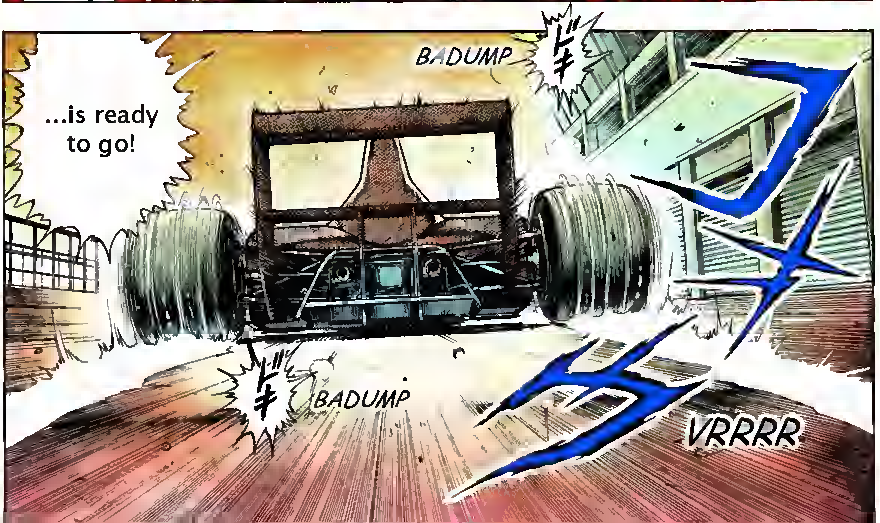
Chapter 1:
Waiting for Godot

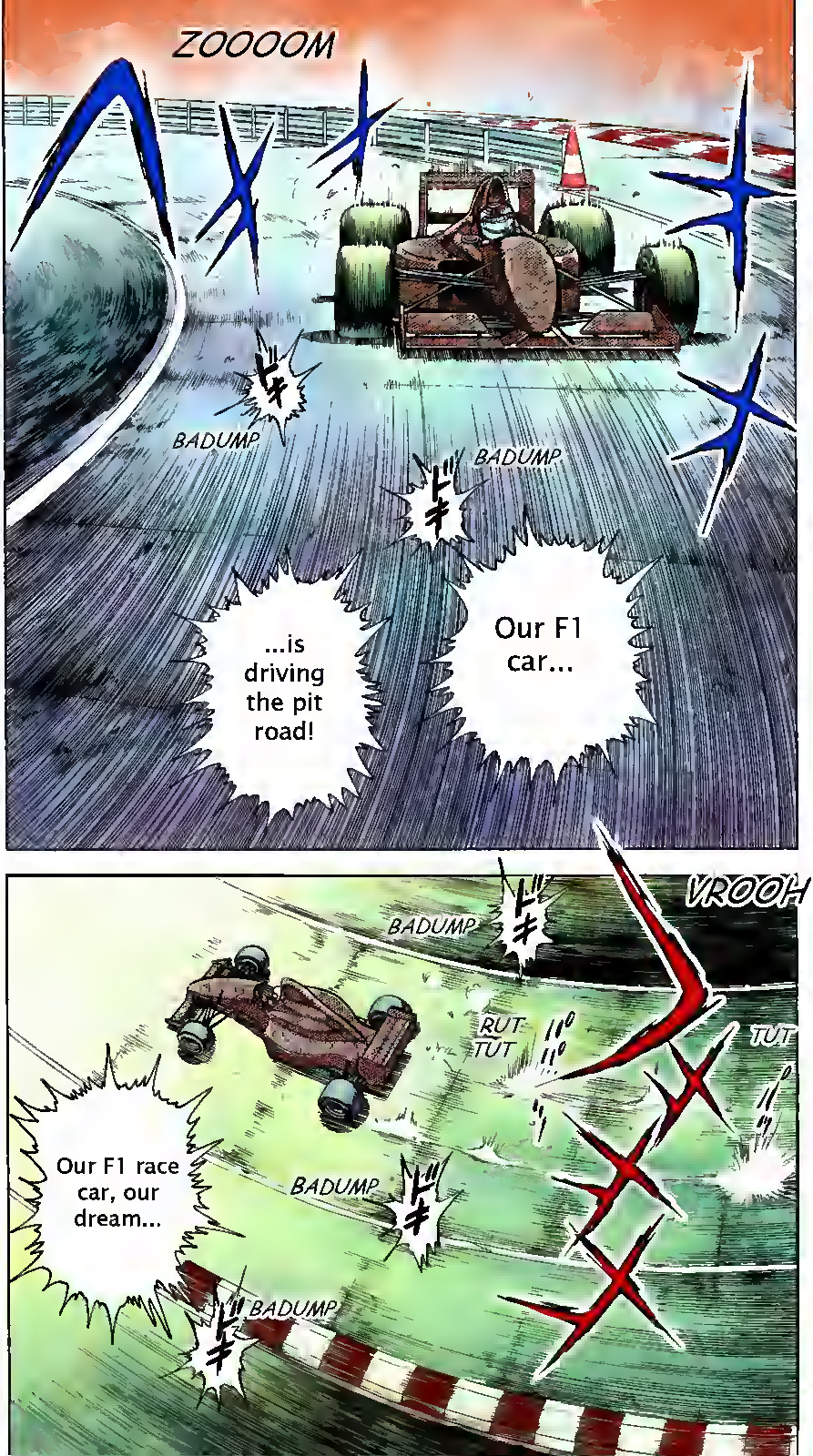
VROOM
VROOM
PIRELLI
TEAM 20


VRRRN
VRR
BREEHH
CLUNK
°C
10°C
WATER
...
CLUNK
GUNMA AKA
VRR
BREEHH
All right! Take it out for a spin! But be gentle with it. This is still t he maiden voyage!
Heh, not bad.
How's the Ford DFR V8 feel?
WHIRR
Don't make it sound so compli-cated!
Whether it's a chick or a car, you gotta be gentle the first time!
VROOM
WHIRR

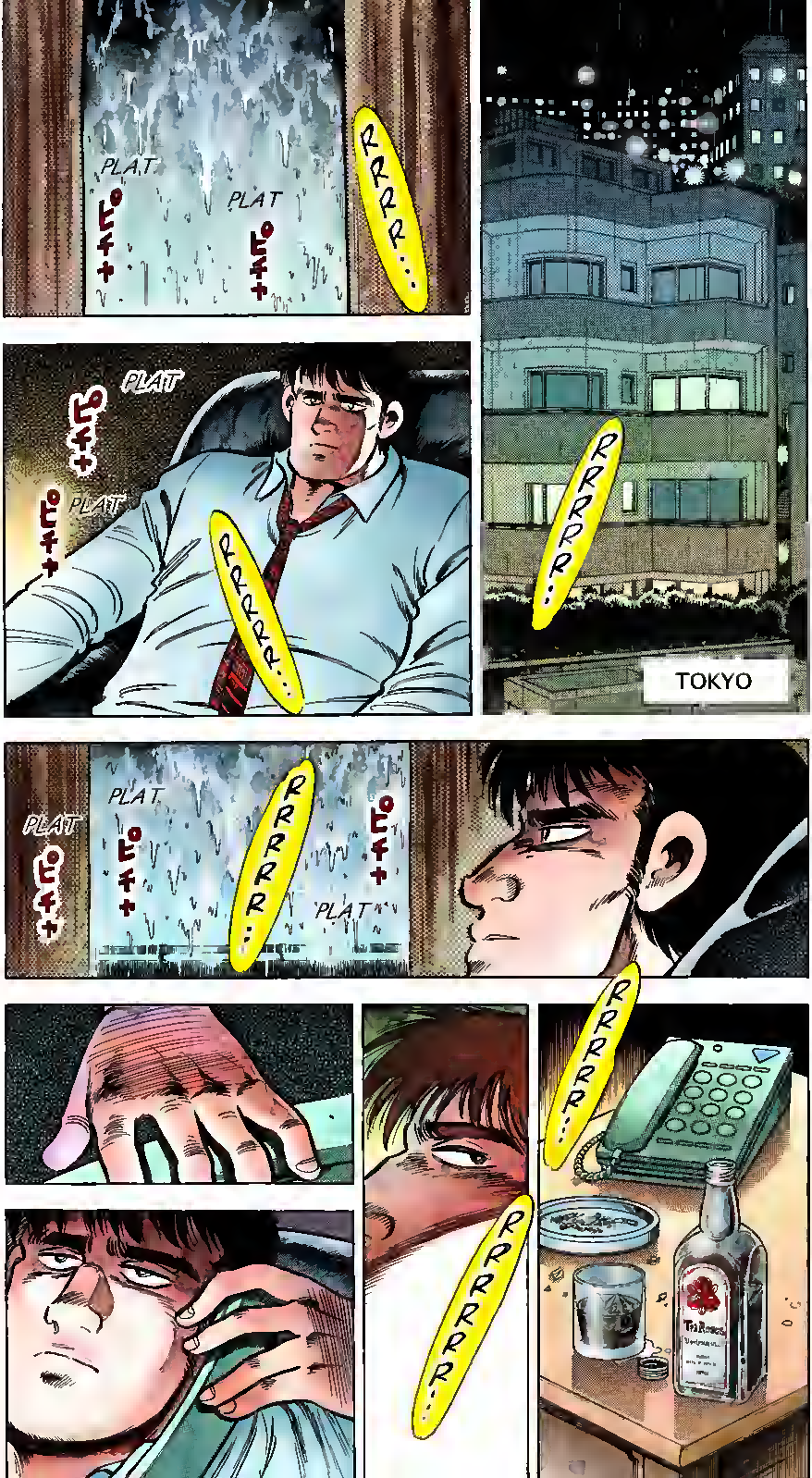

VRRRN
We'll discuss the feel of the car each time and tune it up accordingly.
Enter the pit after every three laps!
After epeating that three or four times, you can go full throttle.
But until then, don't try anything crazy!
VRRRN


My car...
TREMBLE
31"
TREMBLE
Gu... Gunma...

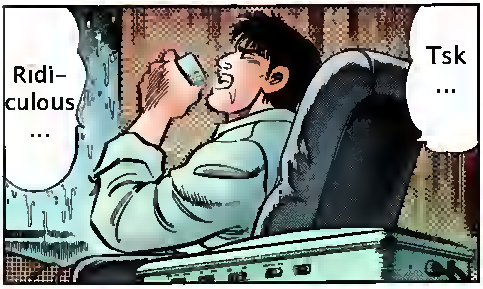

...is ready to go!
BADUMP
BADUMP
VRRRR


ZOOOOM
BADUMP
BADUMP
Our F1 car...
...is driving the pit road!
VROOH
BADUMP
RUT TUT
TUT
Our F1 race car, our dream...
BADUMP
BADUMP

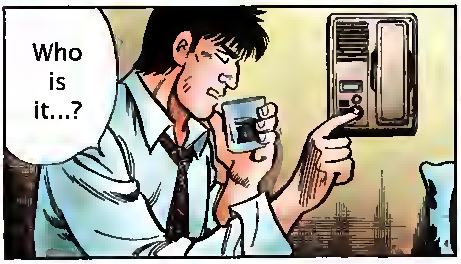
...is now on the circuit!
VROOM
VRRRR

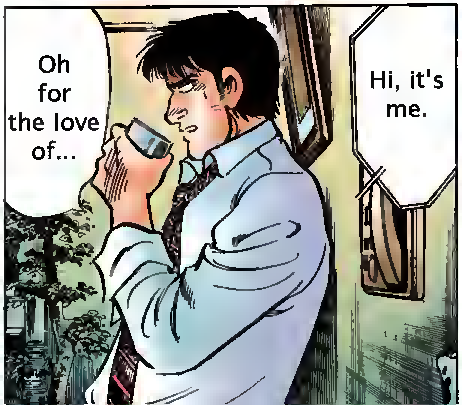

PLAT
ピチャ
PLAT
ピチャ
RRRR...
RRRRR...
TOKYO
PLAT
ピチャ
PLAT
ピチャ
RRRRR...
PLAT
ピチャ
PLAT
ピチャ
RRRRR...
PLAT
ピチャ
RRRRR...
RRRRR...

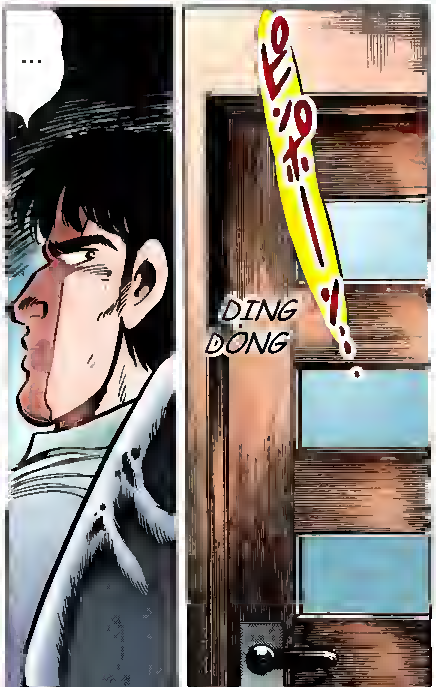
You again...
I don't know who you are, but I've had enough of this. We have nothing to discuss.
I told you. I don't know anything ...
...about my father. How many times are we going to go over this?
I have no idea where he went.

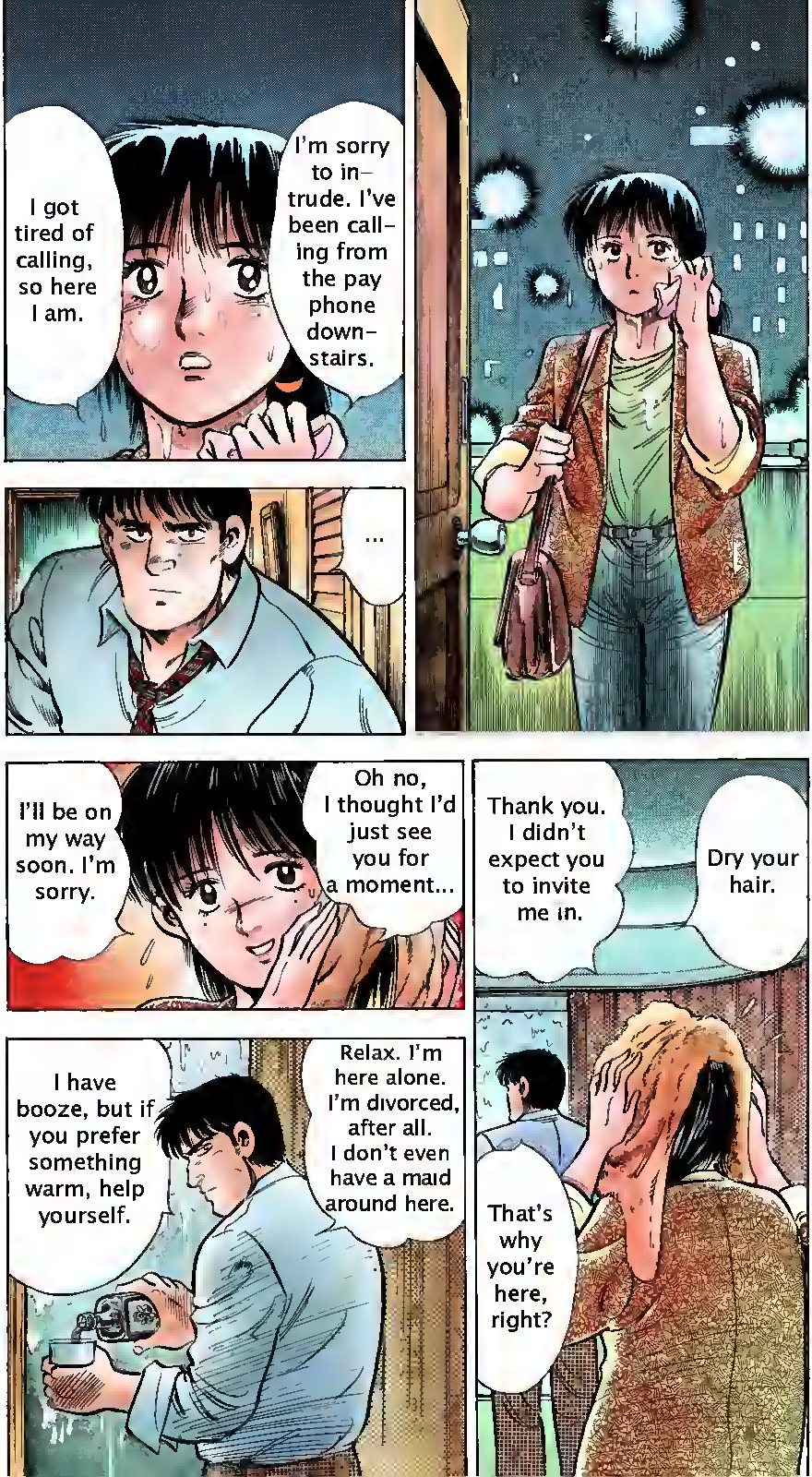

Ridi-culous ...
Tsk ...

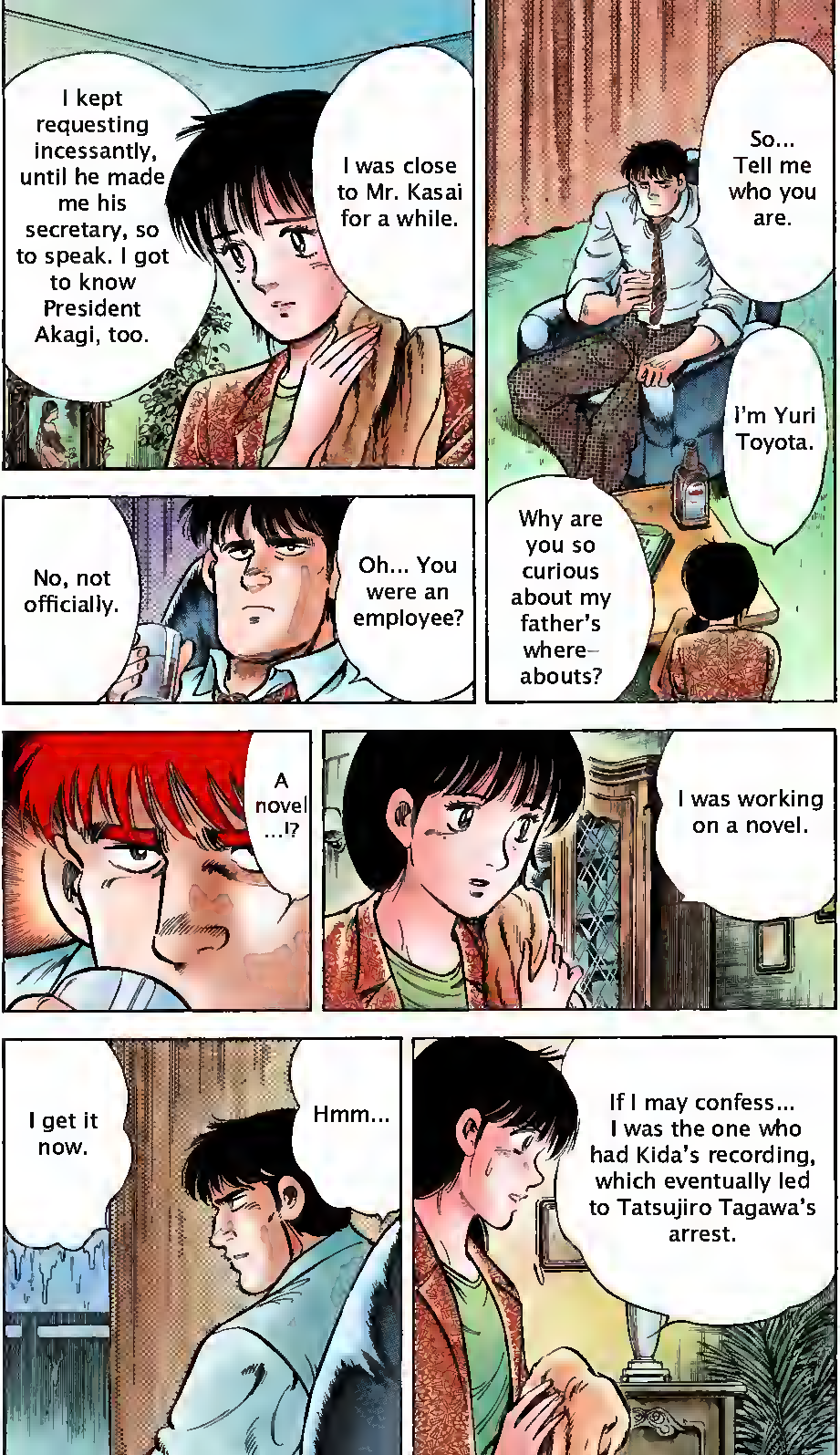
Just stop calling me. This is a nuisance.


Who is it...?

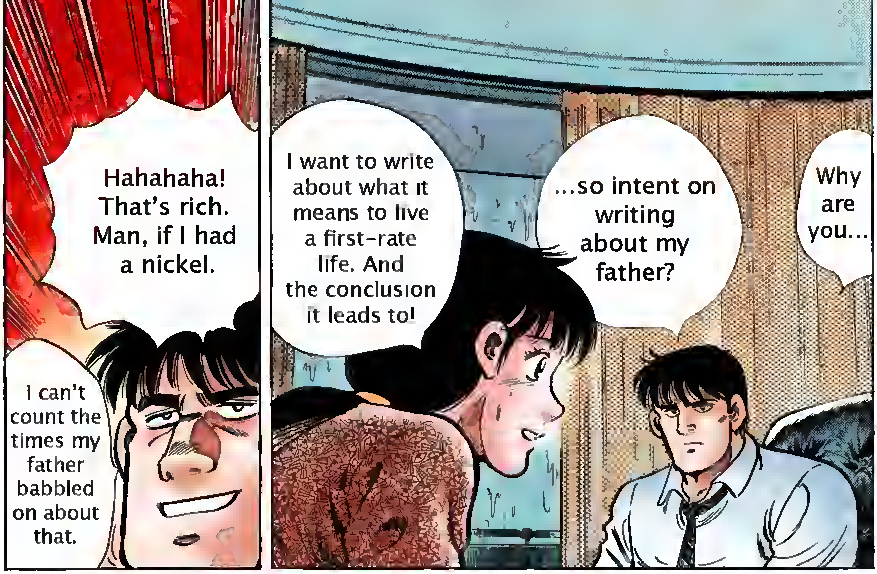

Oh for the love of...
Hi, it's me.

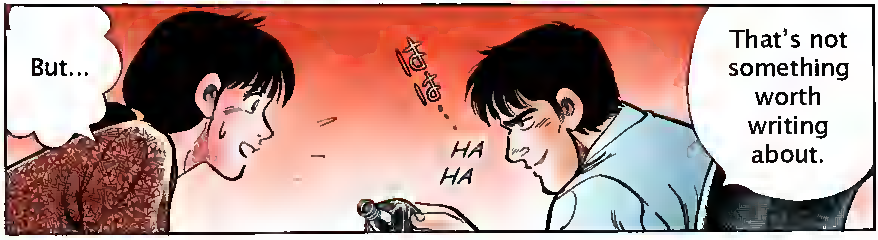

...
ピンポーン!
DING DONG

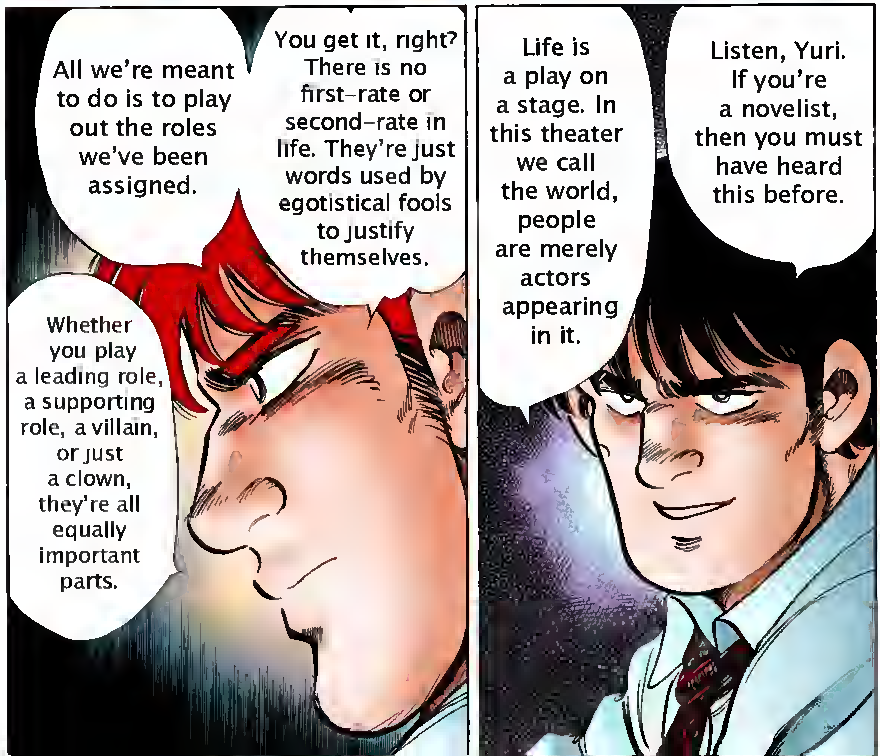

I got tired of calling, so here I am.
I'm sorry to intrude. I've been calling from the pay phone downstairs.
...
I'll be on my way soon. I'm sorry.
Oh no, I thought I'd just see you for a moment...
Thank you. I didn't expect you to invite me in.
Dry your hair.
I have booze, but if you prefer something warm, help yourself.
Relax. I'm here alone. I'm divorced, after all. I don't even have a maid around here.
That's why you're here, right?


I kept requesting incessantly, until he made me his secretary, so to speak. I got to know President Akagi, too.
I was close to Mr. Kasai for a while.
So... Tell me who you are.
I'm Yuri Toyota.
Why are you so curious about my father's whereabouts?
No, not officially.
Oh... You were an employee?
A novel ...!?
I was working on a novel.
I get it now.
Hmm...
If I may confess... I was the one who had Kida's recording, which eventually led to Tatsujiro Tagawa's arrest.

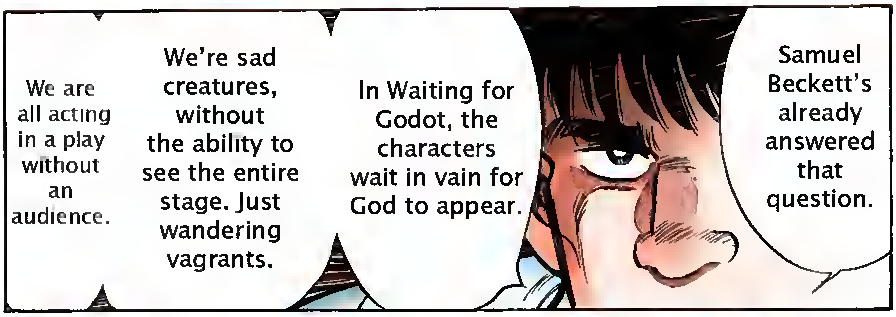
So it was you.
Now that you mention it, I do remember a woman by that name by Kasai's side.
Yuri Toyota, huh?
...
Hm. So you're Yuri Toyota.
I was just another one of his pawns, after all. Just an instrument in his scheme for revenge against my father.
Well, what's done is done. Uncle Tatsu dug his own grave.
CLUNK
Where could they have gone!?
Otherwise, I can't finish my novel! I'm 80% finished, but with those two gone, I don't know what to do!
Mr. Shoma, please! I need to know where those two are!


Why are you...
...so intent on writing about my father?
I want to write about what it means to live a first-rate life. And the conclusion it leads to!
Hahahaha! That's rich. Man, if I had a nickel.
I can't count the times my father babbled on about that.

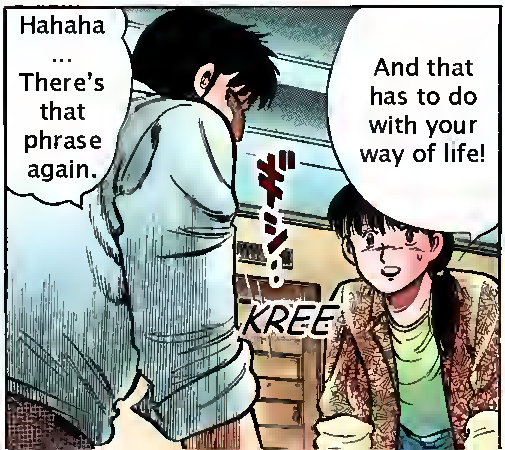

But...
HA HA
That's not something worth writing about.

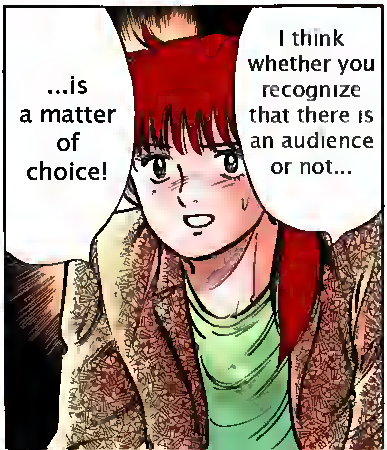

Listen, Yuri. If you're a novelist, then you must have heard this before.
Life is a play on a stage. In this theater we call the world, people are merely actors appearing in it.
You get it, right? There is no first-rate or second-rate in life. They're just words used by egotistical fools to justify themselves.
All we're meant to do is to play out the roles we've been assigned.
Whether you play a leading role, a supporting role, a villain, or just a clown, they're all equally important parts.

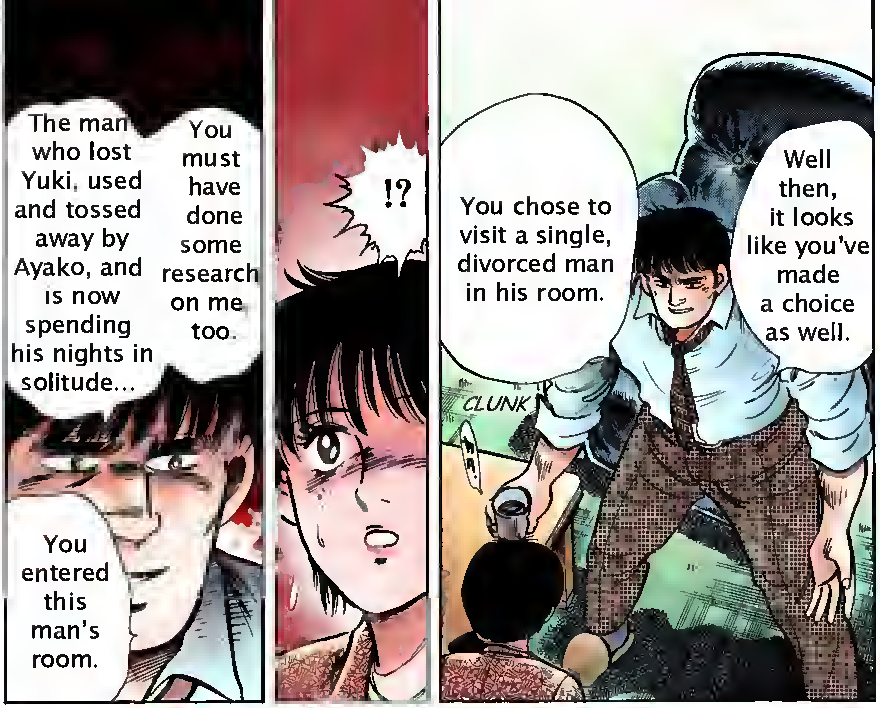
But if life is a play, then there must be an audience. An audience that can see the entire stage, but cannot be seen by the actors.
Well said! I agree with you in the sense that all lives are equally important

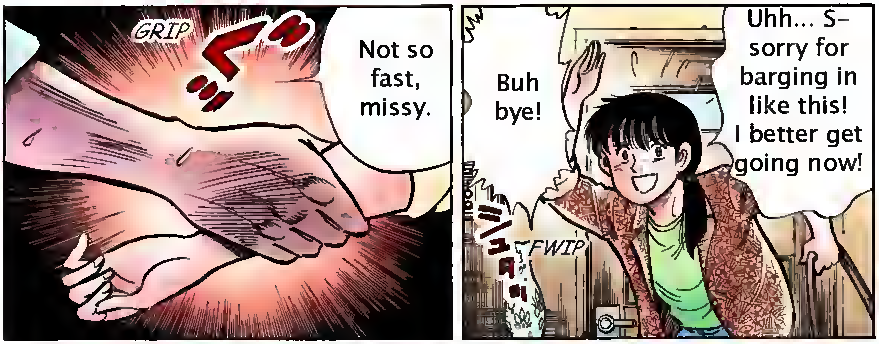

We are all acting in a play without an audience.
We're sad creatures, without the ability to see the entire stage. Just wandering vagrants.
In Waiting for Godot, the characters wait in vain for God to appear.
Samuel Beckett's already answered that question.

Because ..
Why not?
I don't agree with you.
Am I wrong?
Is that how you see it?

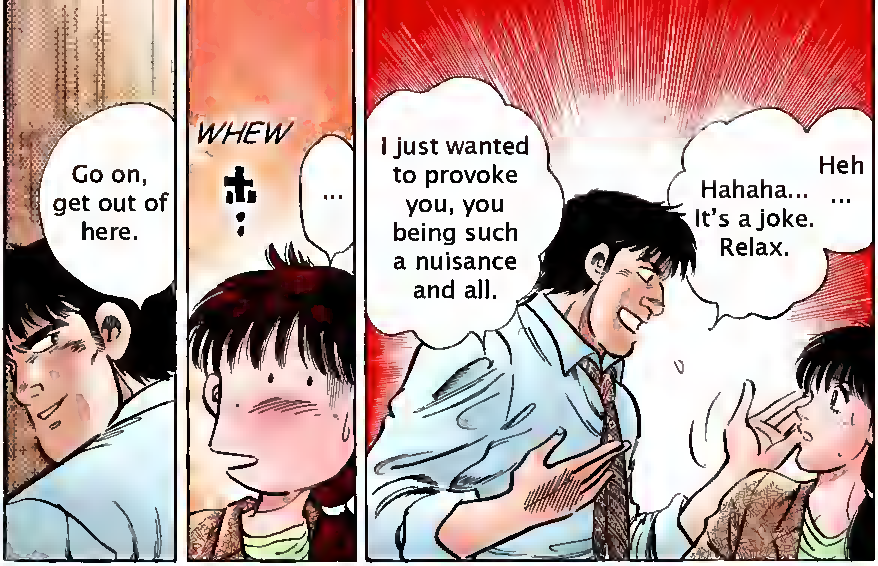

Hahaha ... There's that phrase again.
And that has to do with your way of life!
KREE

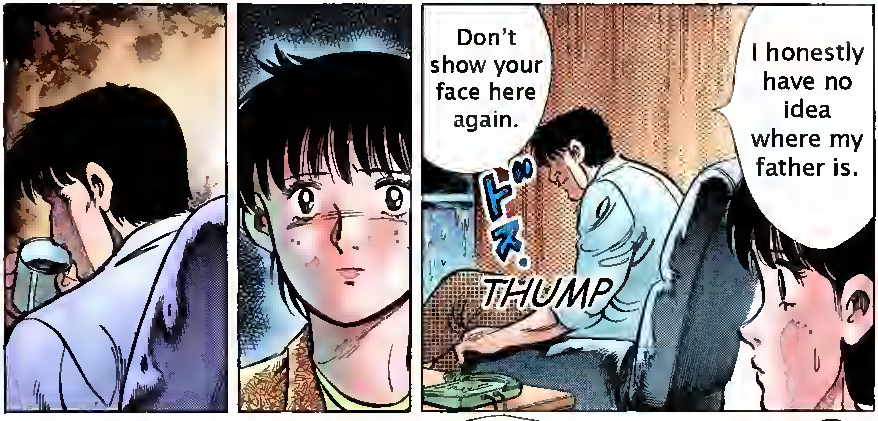

...is a matter of choice!
I think whether you recognize that there is an audience or not...

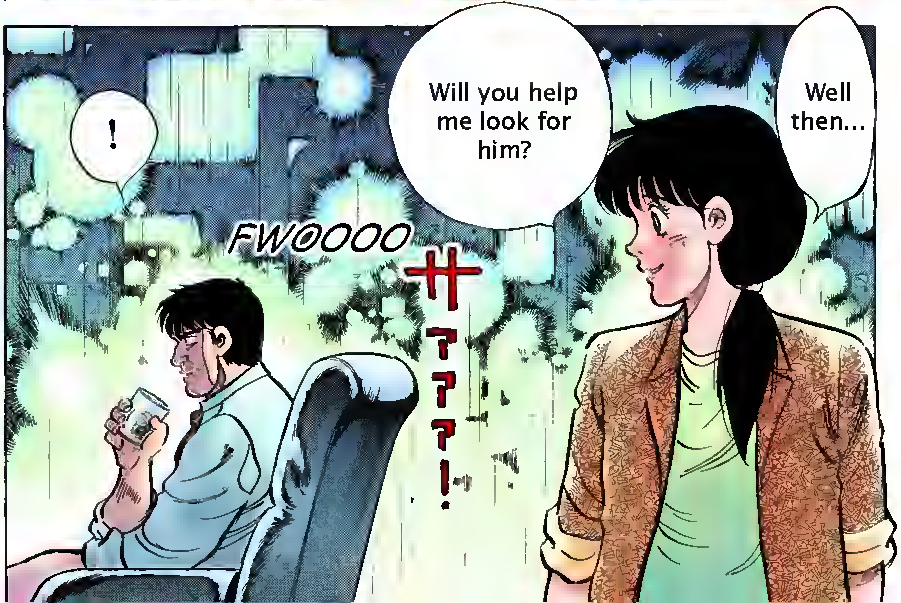

The man who lost Yuki, used and tossed away by Ayako, and is now spending his nights in solitude...
You must have done some research on me too.
You entered this man's room.
!?
You chose to visit a single, divorced man in his room.
Well then, it looks like you've made a choice as well.
CLUNK

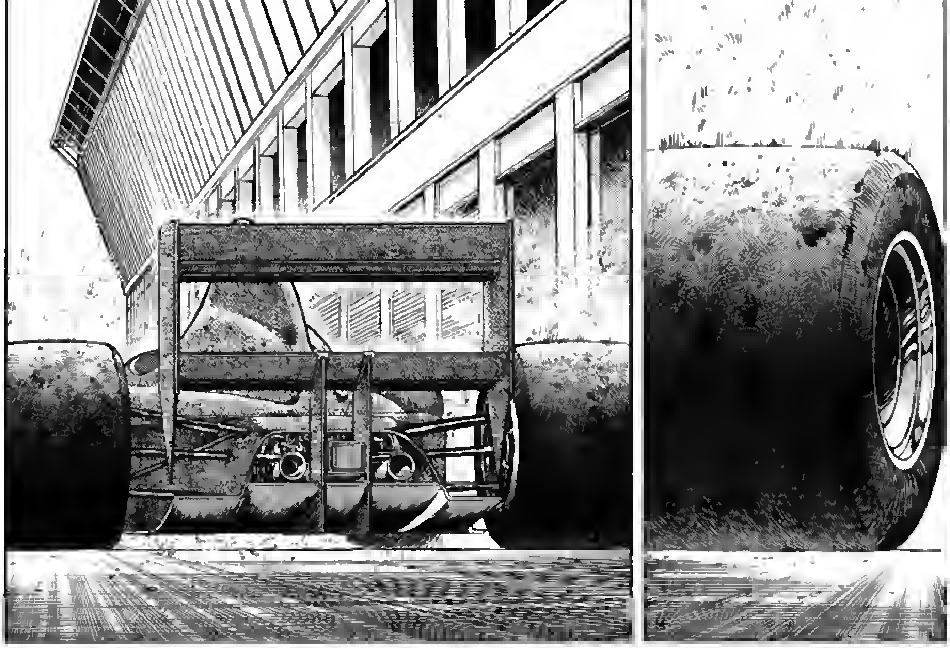

GRIP
Not so fast, missy.
Buh bye!
Uhh... S-sorry for barging in like this! I better get going now!
FWIP

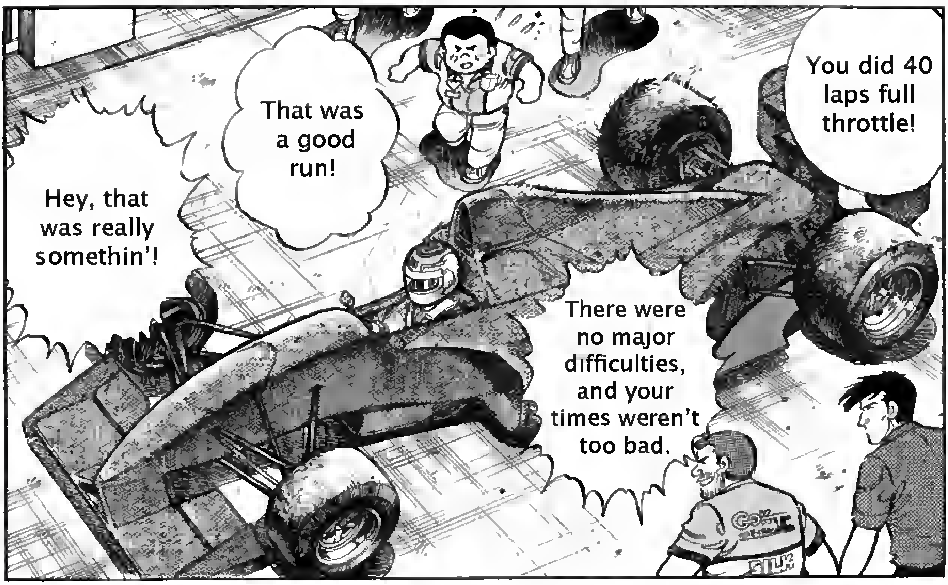
If you're some cut-rate actor who can't even bring an audience, I'll create one for you!
I'll write about this! If you try anything funny, I'll write all about you!
Why should I? I've taken a liking to you.
No! Let go!

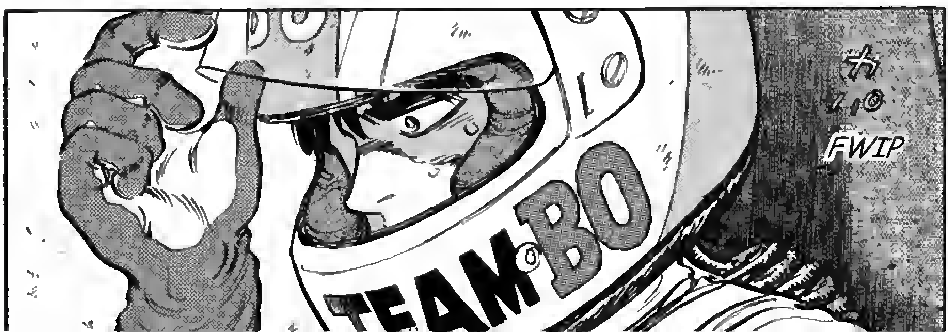

Go on, get out of here.
WHEW
...
I just wanted to provoke you, you being such a nuisance and all.
Hahaha... It's a joke. Relax.
Heh ...


Don't show your face here again.
I honestly have no idea where my father is.
THUMP

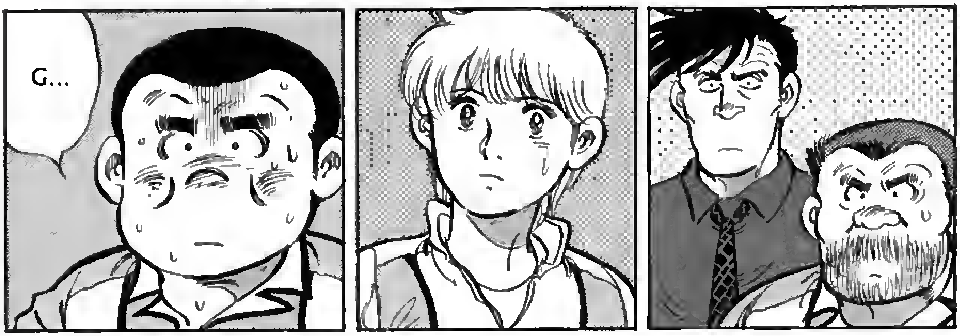

!
Will you help me look for him?
Well then...
FWOOOO
アアア!




That was a good run!
You did 40 laps full throttle!
Hey, that was really somethin'!
There were no major difficulties, and your times weren't too bad.

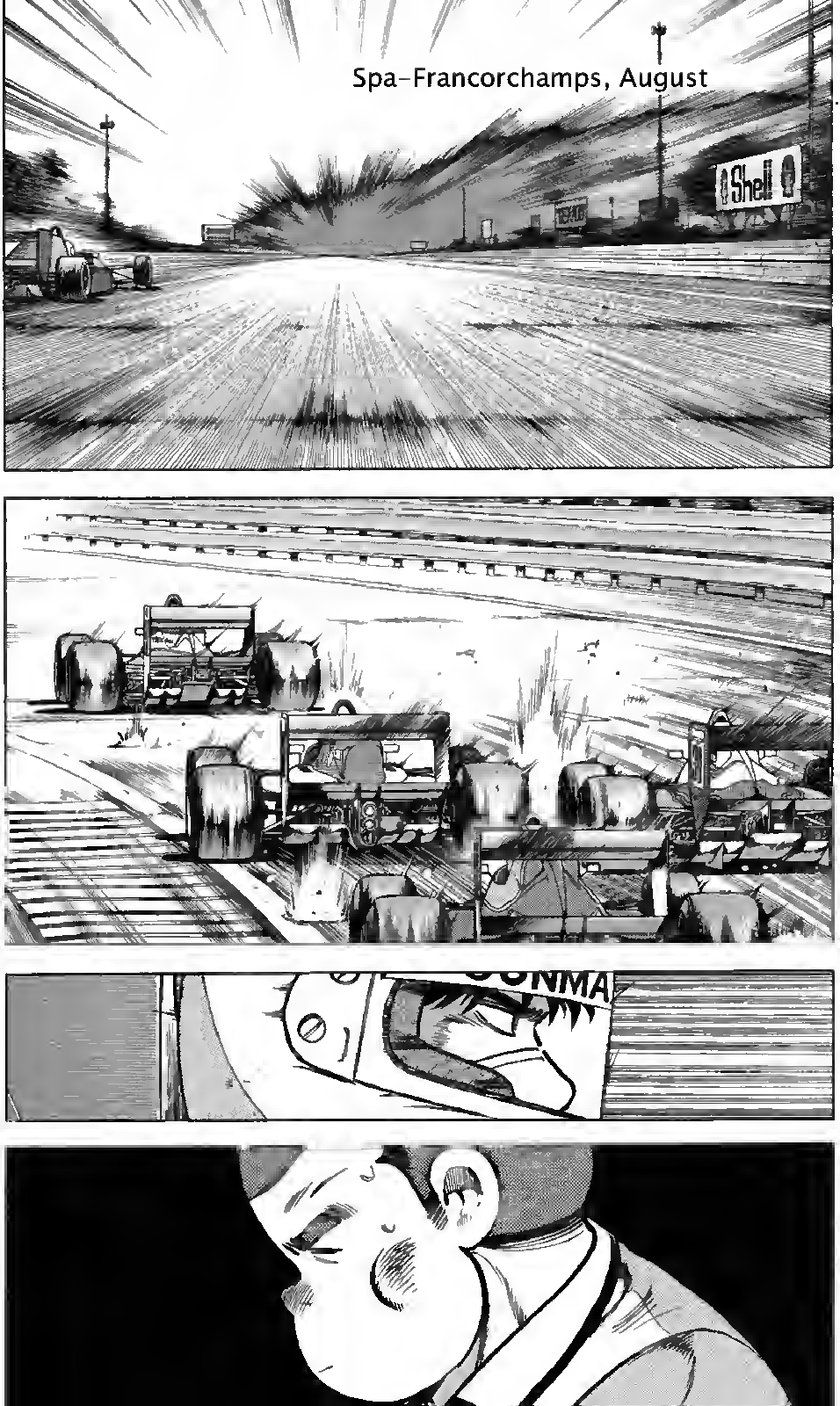

FWIP

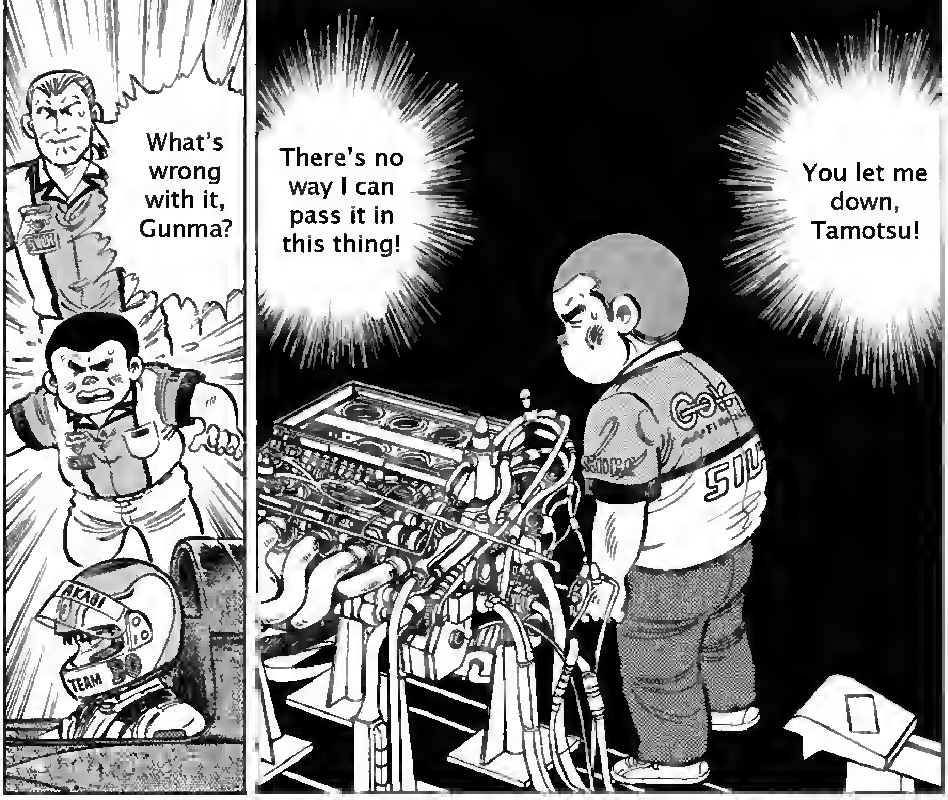
There's no way I can pass it in this thing!
!?
Huh!?
You let me down, dude!
Tamo-tsu!
OUT.

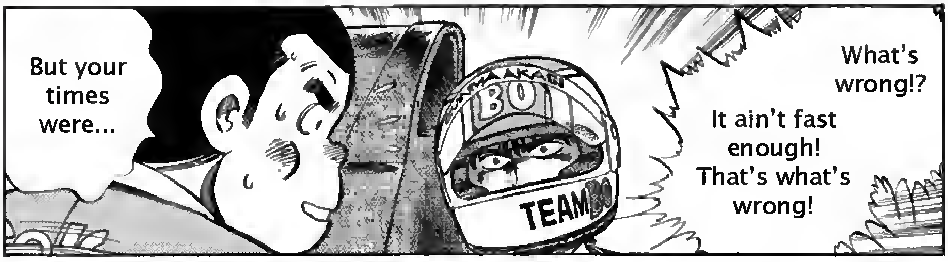

G...

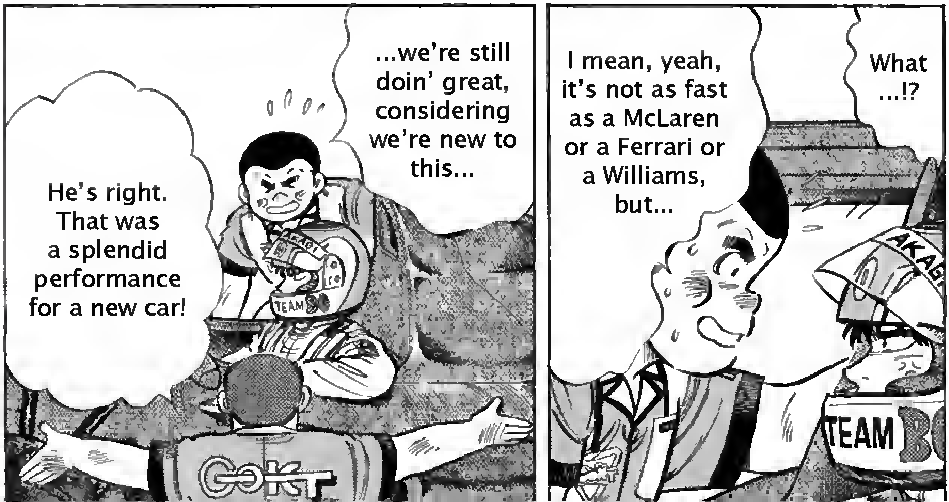
Gunma...

Chapter 2:
More!

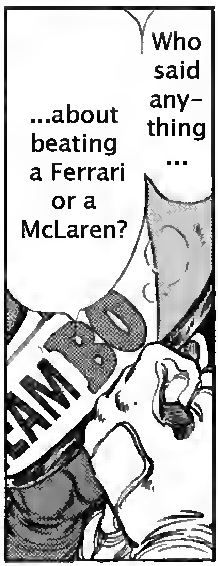

Spa-Francorchamps, August
Shell

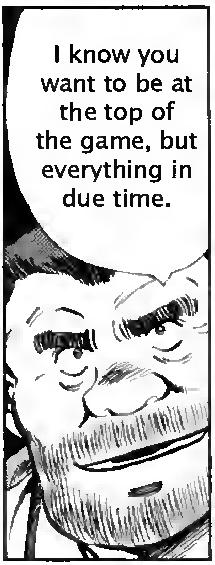

What's wrong with it, Gunma?
There's no way I can pass it in this thing!
You let me down, Tamotsu!

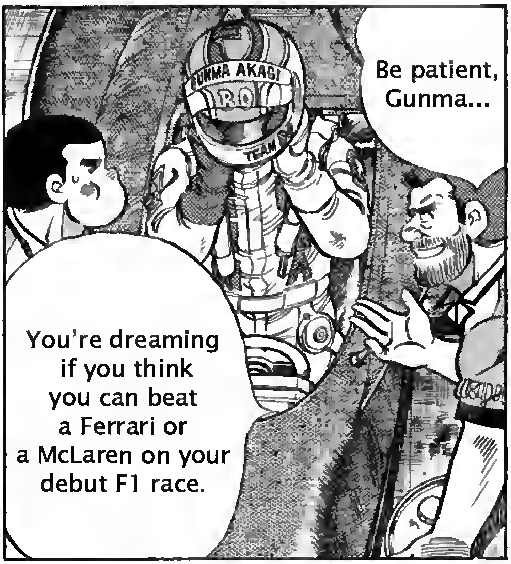

But your times were...
What's wrong!?
It ain't fast enough! That's what's wrong!


He's right. That was a splendid performance for a new car!
...we're still doin' great, considering we're new to this...
I mean, yeah, it's not as fast as a McLaren or a Ferrari or a Williams, but...
What ...!?

GUNMA
Now we just need to focus our efforts on the drivability issue, and we'll be looking at even better times!
You made decent times on a high-speed circuit like Silver-stone!


Who said anything ...
...about beating a Ferrari or a McLaren?

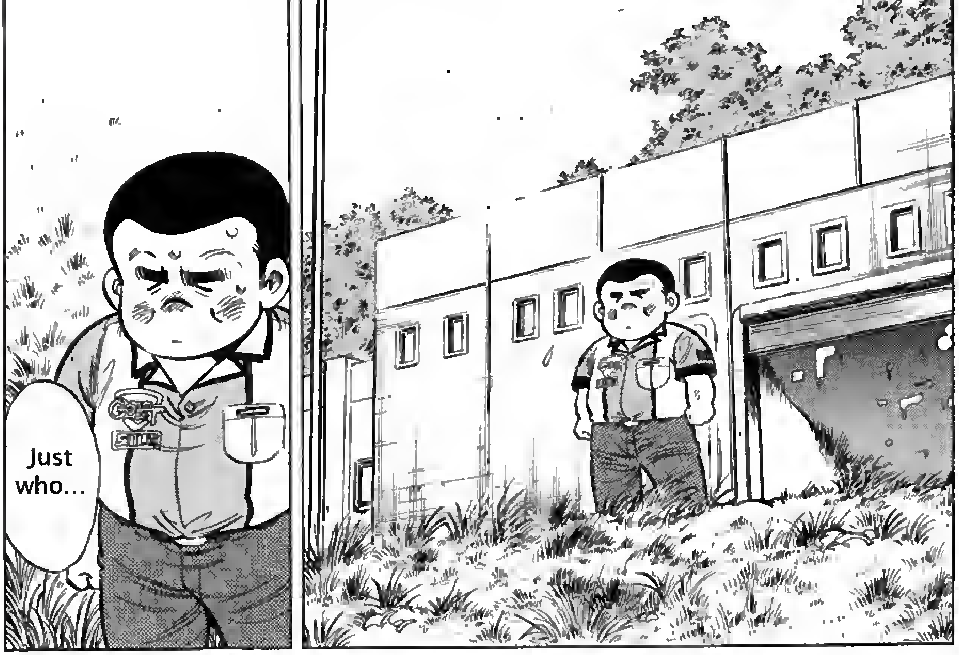

I know you want to be at the top of the game, but everything in due time.


GUNMA AKAGI
Be patient, Gunma...
You're dreaming if you think you can beat a Ferrari or a McLaren on your debut F1 race.

...!?

What I said was that I can't pass "it" on this ride!

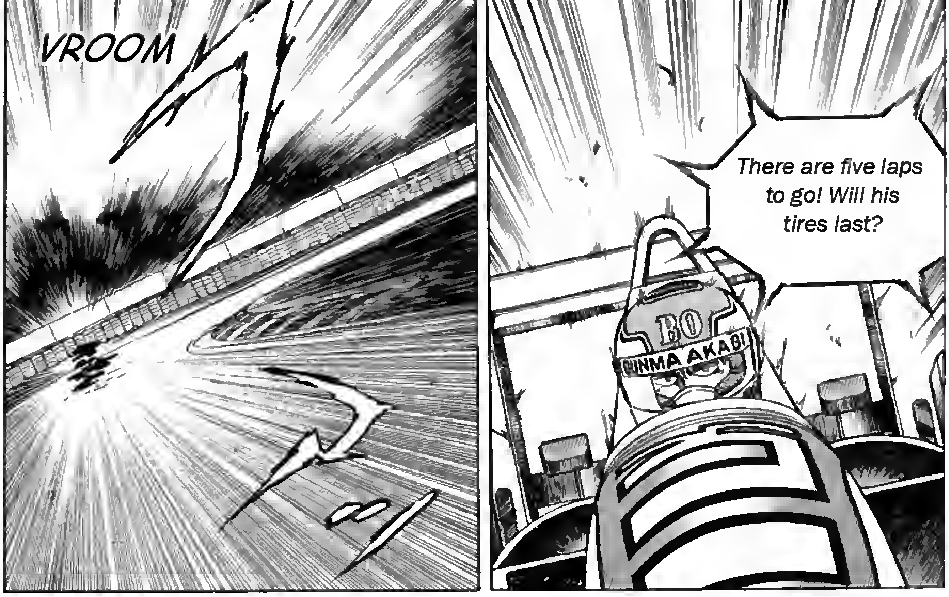
James...
Are you still worried about it?
You made the right choice. His expectations are just too high...
Tamotsu...
Or would it be better to say that we followed in Barnard's footsteps...?
Even the genius designer John Bamard must have come to the same conclusion when he transferred from Ferrari to Benetton this year.
Either way, Gunma Akagi expects too much.
There's no need to panic.
...
You let me down...
You let me down, Tamotsu...

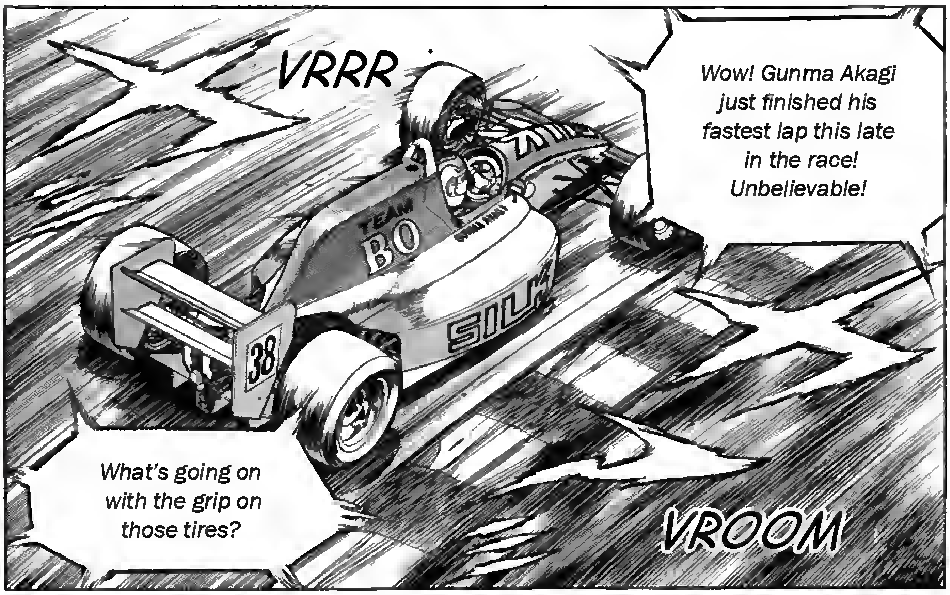

Just who...

...trying to pass?
...is Gunma...

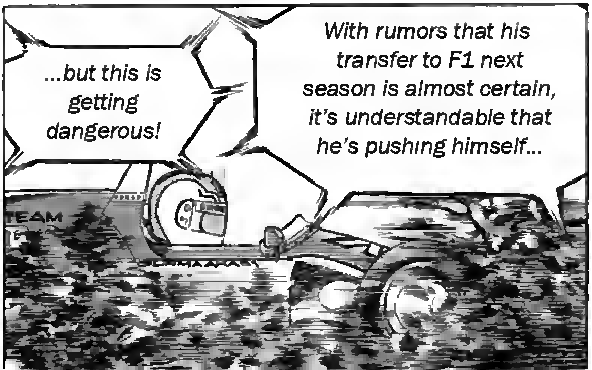
VROOOH
Car No. 38, Gunma Akagi...
...has taken the lead!
Marlboro

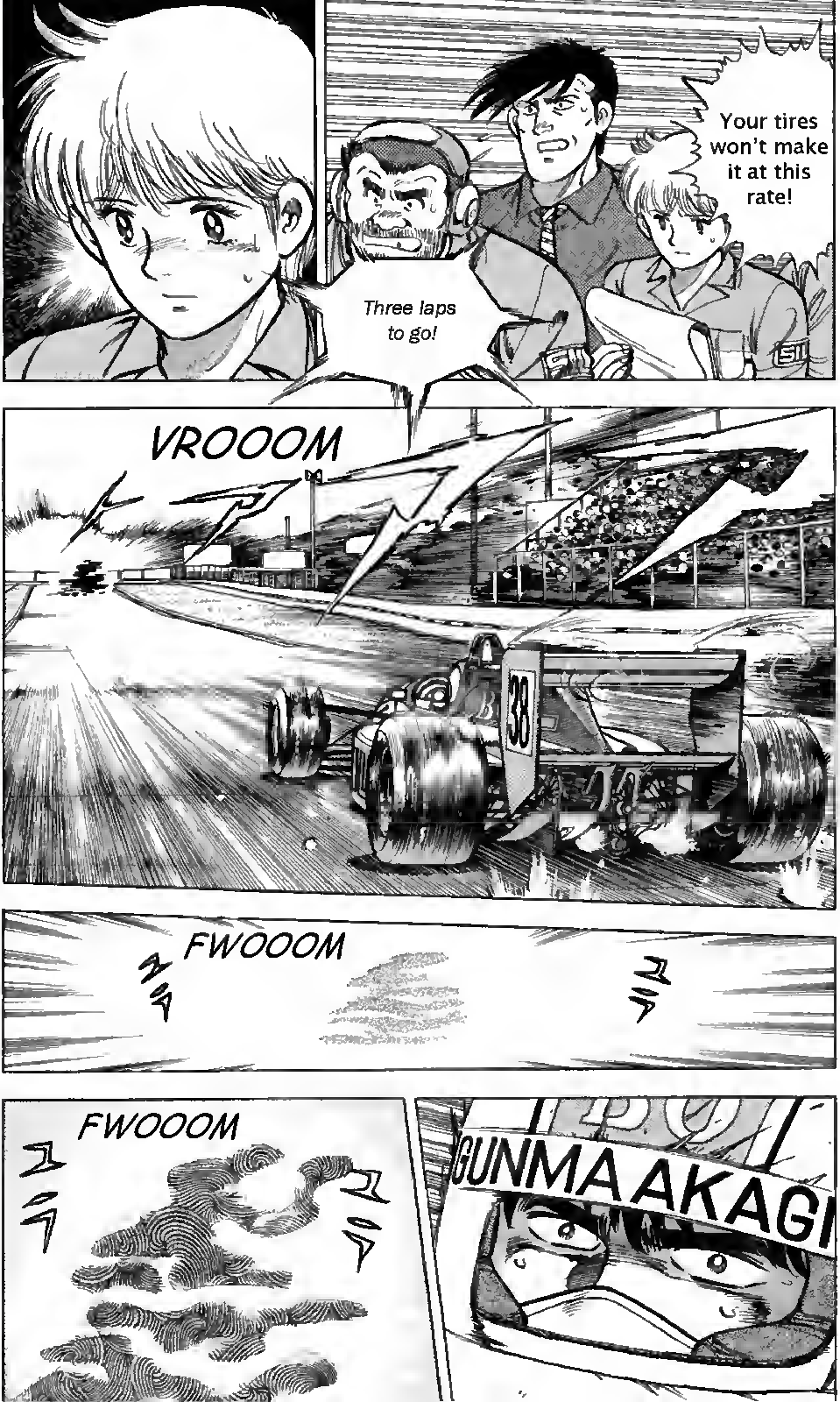
VWOOSH
CHAMPION
5
VROOOOOM


VROOM
There are five laps to go! Will his tires last?
BO
GUNMA AKAGI


VRRR
Wow! Gunma Akagi just finished his fastest lap this late in the race! Unbelievable!
What's going on with the grip on those tires?
VROOM
TEAM
BO
38

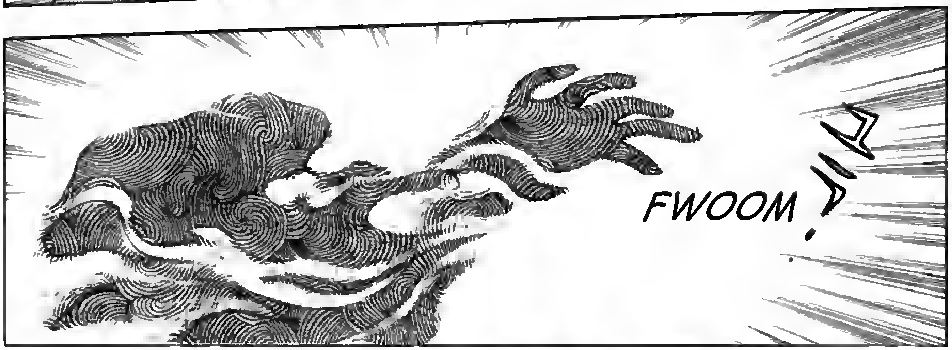
Be careful, Gunma!


...but this is getting dangerous!
With rumors that his transfer to F1 next season is almost certain, it's understandable that he's pushing himself...
TEAM


Your tires won't make it at this rate!
Three laps to go!
VROOOOM
38
FWOOOM
FWOOOM
GUNMA AKAGI

BISH
BISH

!


FWOOM!

What!?
I couldn't hear you!
Gunma! What did you just say!?

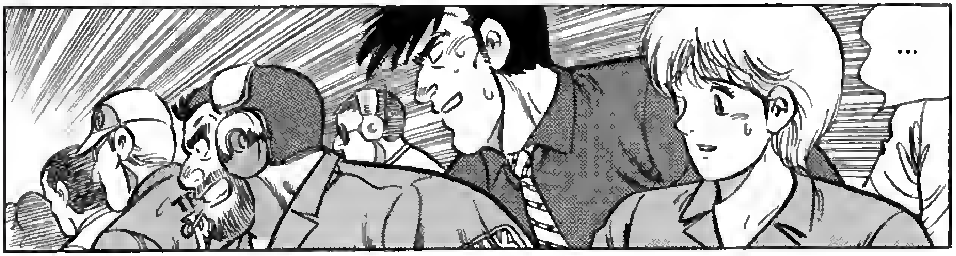
Huh...?
AKAGI
TEAM

It's beckoning me...
It's...
BZZZZ
...looking at me...
...beckoning me...
It's...
VWOOSH
TEAM BO
GUNMA AKAGI

AKAG
!?
AKAGI
Damn it!
Who the hell
are you!?
KRRK
TREMBLE

SCREETCH
38
SILK
GUNMA AKAGI
GUNMA AKAGI
KREEEE

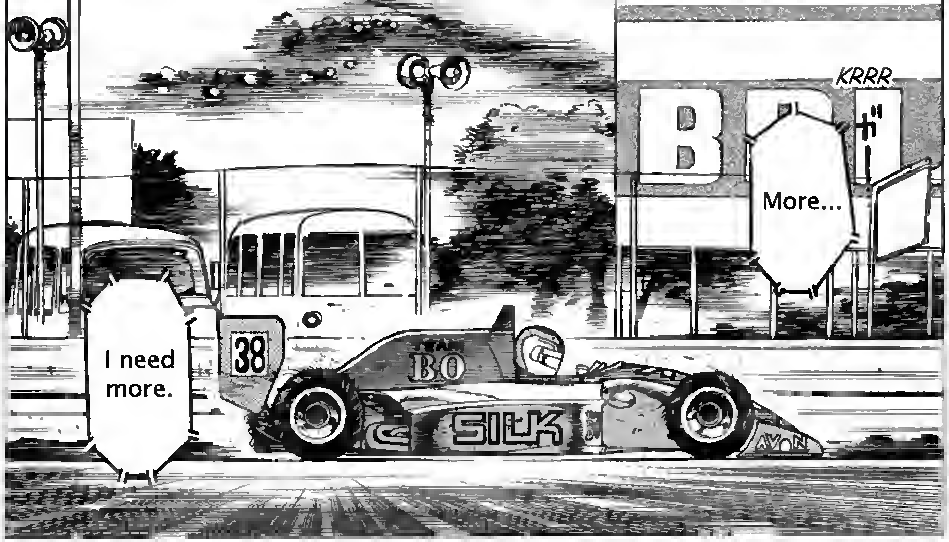
FRANKLIN
WHOOOAH
FWOOP

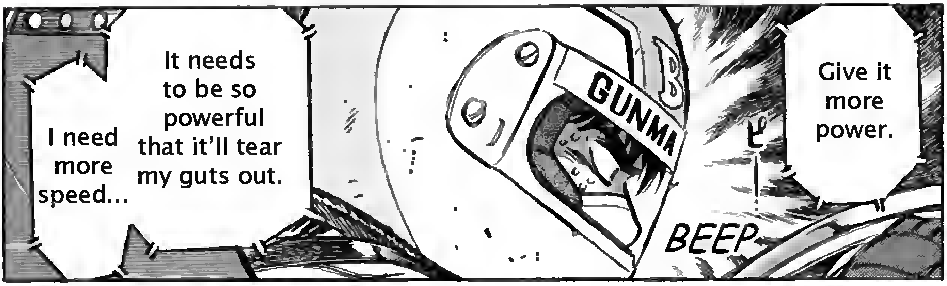

...

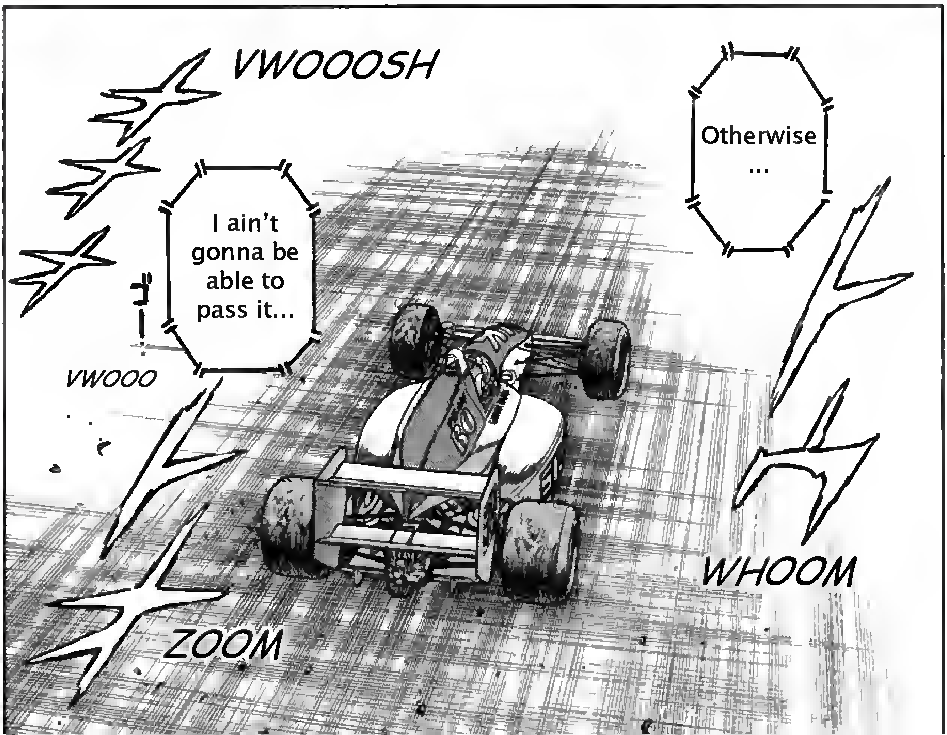
He never changes, does he...?
But man...

He made it...
Phew ...

!?
Hush.
He's saying something... He's muttering.
TEAM BO
TEAM BO


KRRR
More...
I need more.
38
BO
SILK
AVON

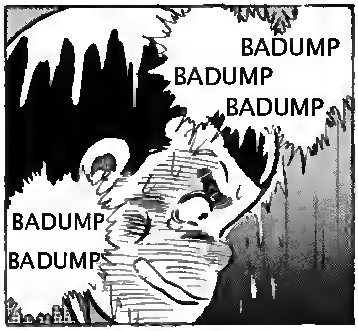

I need more speed...
It needs to be so powerful that it'll tear my guts out.
GUNMA
Give it more power.
BEEP


VWOOOSH
Otherwise ...
I ain't gonna be able to pass it...
VWOOO
WHOOM
ZOOM

Pal
KING LION
You let me down, dude...
London
GULP

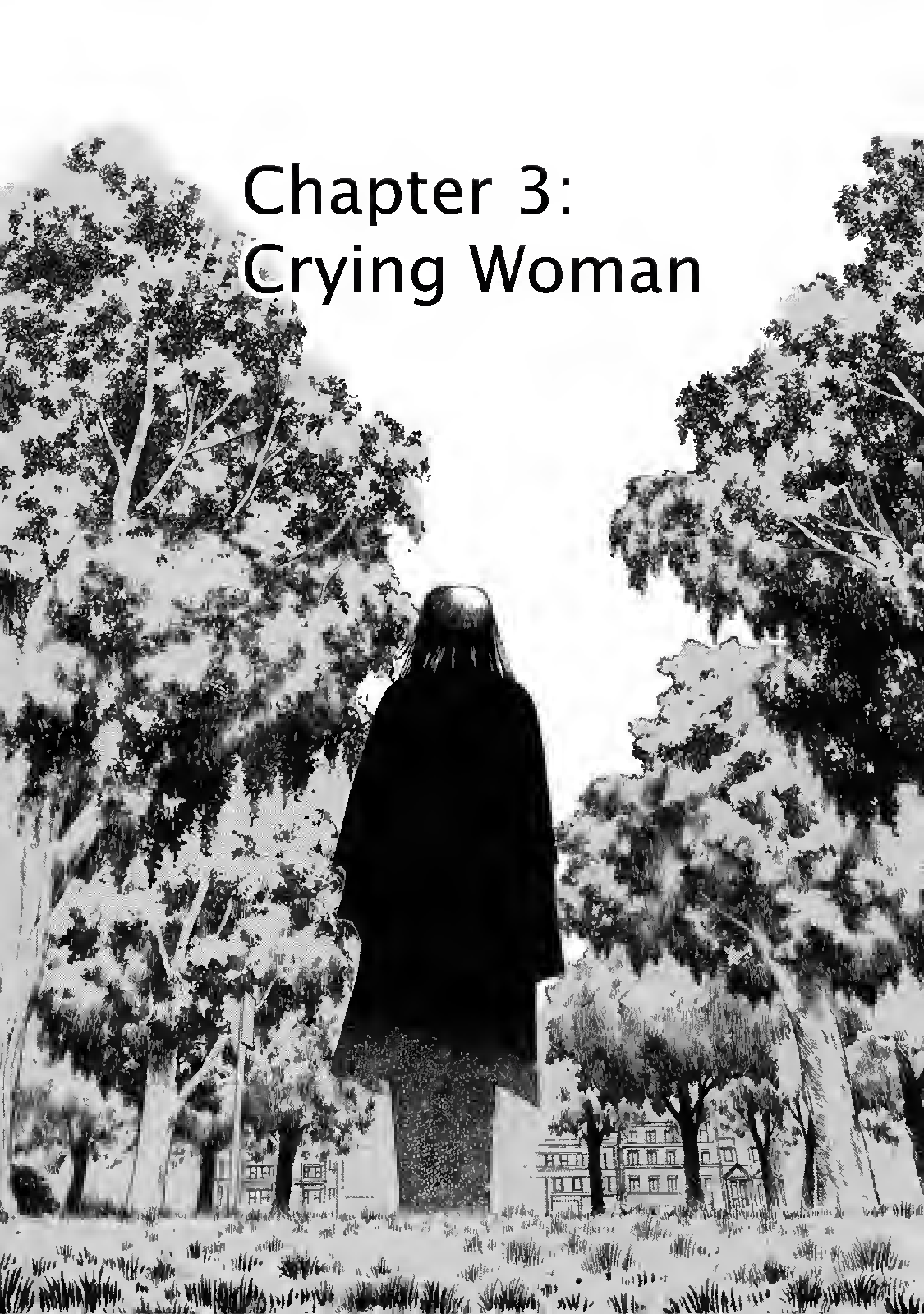
SHUCKS
...
Hey lady...
FWISH

You wanna...
...fool around!?
CLOP
CLOP


BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP

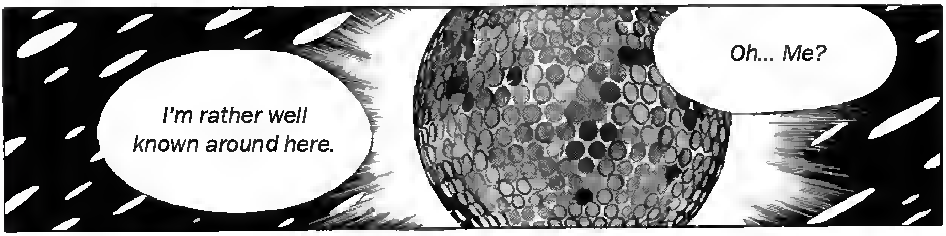
GSSHHH

Chapter 3: Crying Woman



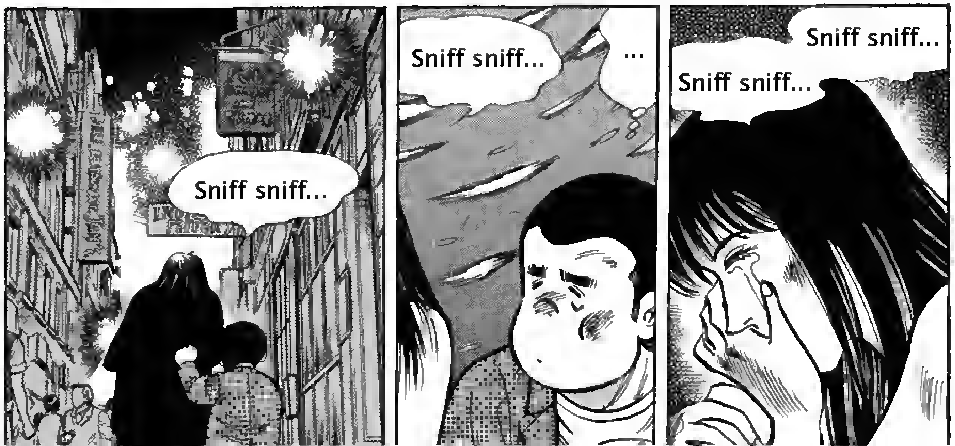
Hey there, chap. You got any cash on you?
You shouldn't drink so much darling
Why don't you buy me a drink? One bourbon
DIRTY DICK
1787

If you do...
...I'll cry for you in return.

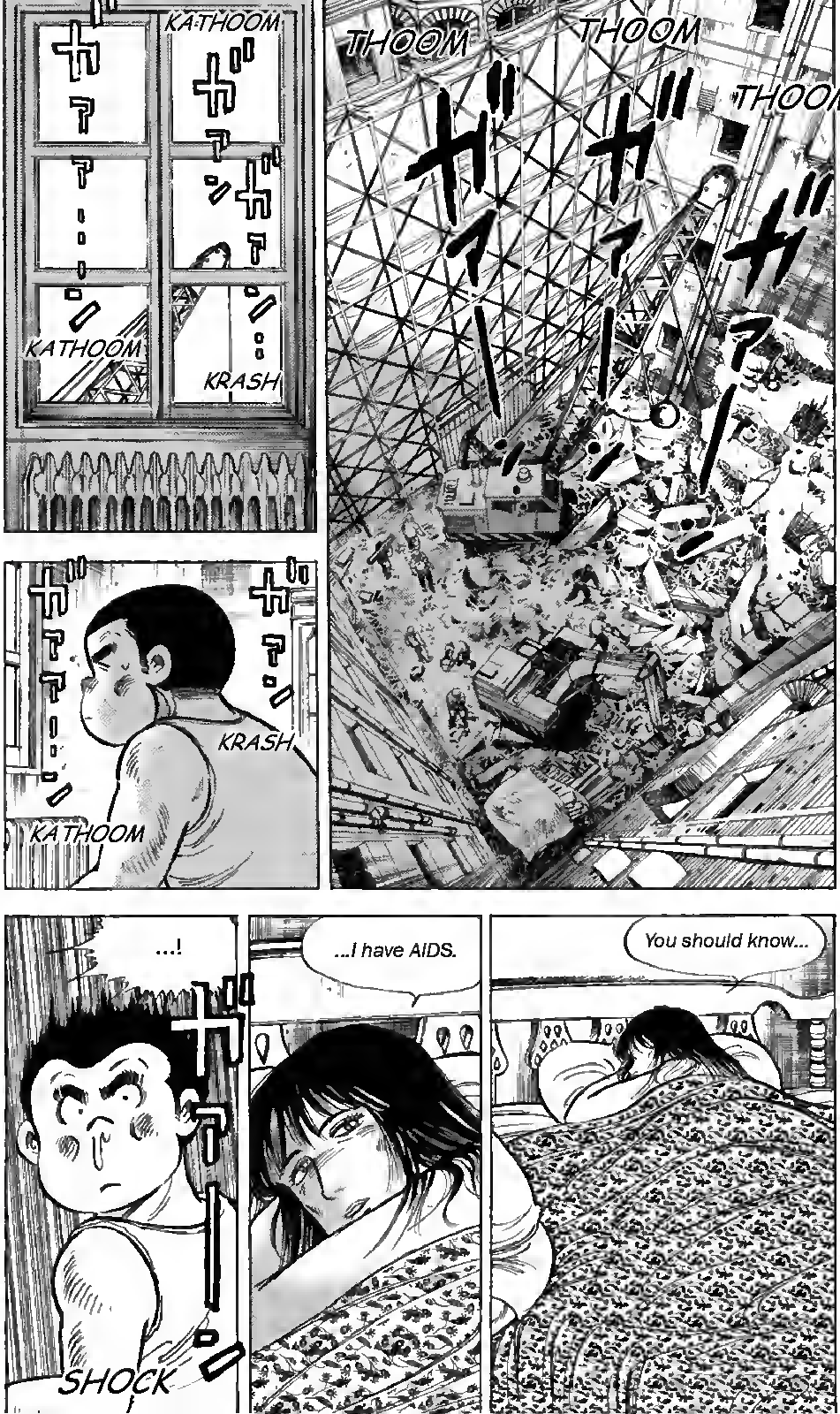

Oh... Me?
I'm rather well known around here.

2

I'm the crying woman.



* "Hana Ichi Monme" Lyrics by Shuji Terayama, Music by Kozaburo Yamamoto. Performed by Maki Asakawa

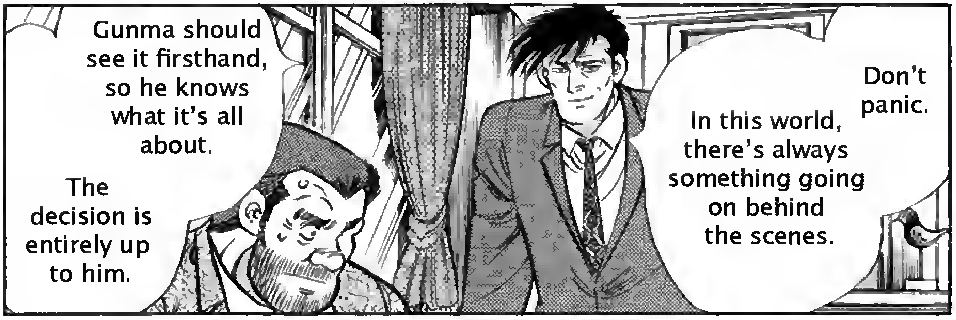

KA-THOOM
KATHOOM
KRASH
THOOM
THOOM
THOOM
KRASH
KATHOOM
...!
SHOCK
...I have AIDS.
You should know...

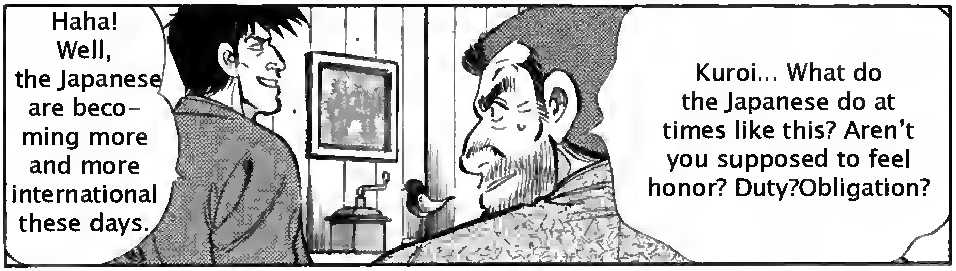
Hehe...
Kidding...
...

HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA

It's only a rumor, so you'd have to ask the man himself, but...
Which team is it!?
What!? Some other team's trying to make Gunma an offer!?
Dammit! Ron Dennis must be behind this!
McLaren...!?
Like I said, this is merely hearsay. It could be anybody, but I've heard that it may be McLaren.
We're talking about THE McLaren here! What are we gonna do if they take Gunma away!?
How can you be so relaxed!?
Well, this doesn't really come as a surprise, does it?
He's got the talent. It's a wonder why these offers haven't come until now.
It's only natural he wants to drive a faster car.
If he decides to go, then there's nothing we can do.

We don't really know what exactly is going on in Gunma's head. We haven't made that clear.
Yeah, you're right.
But that's just the way we see it.
I thought we were all irreplace-able parts!
Kuroi...

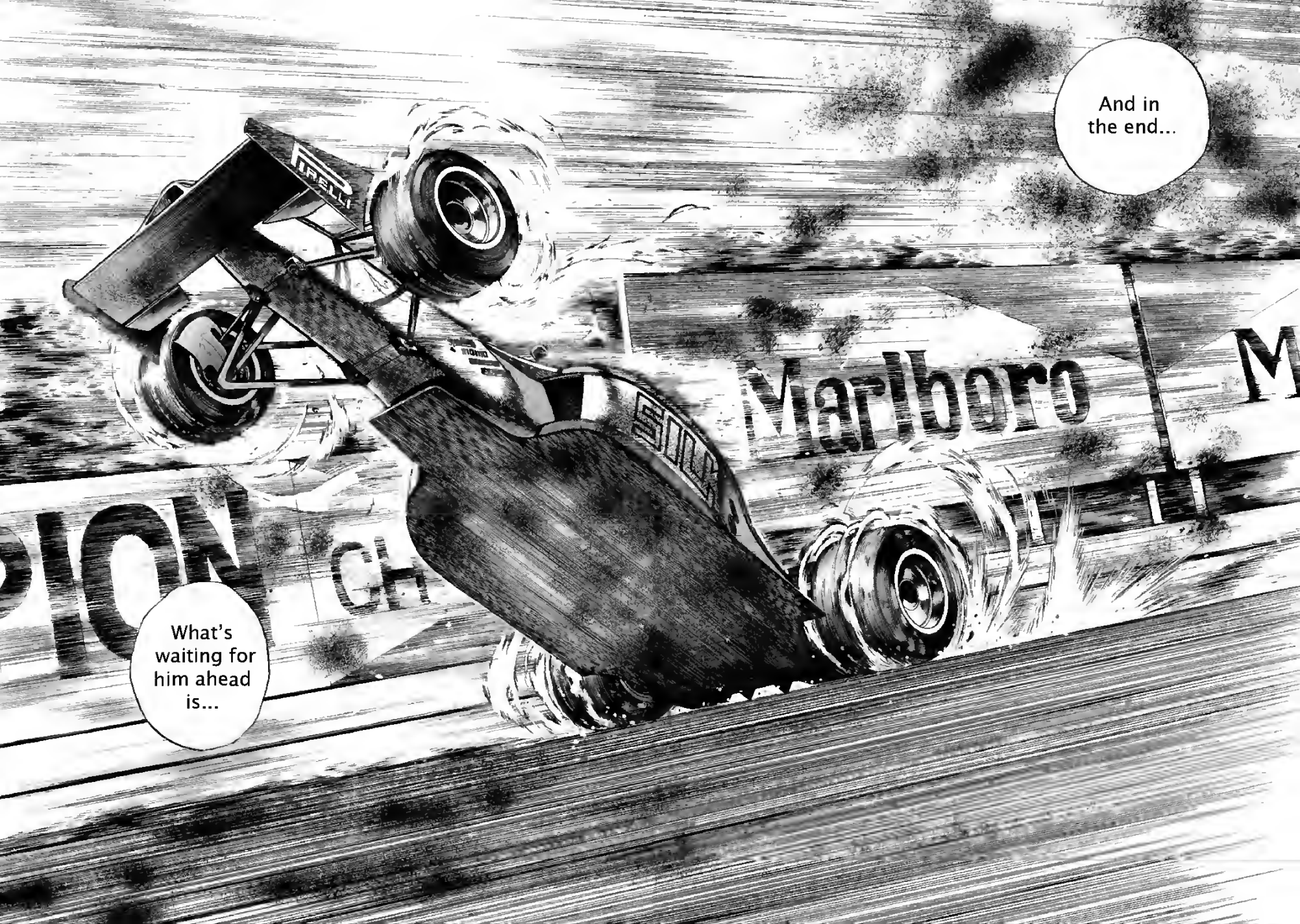

Gunma should see it firsthand, so he knows what it's all about.
The decision is entirely up to him.
Don't panic.
In this world, there's always something going on behind the scenes.


Haha! Well, the Japanese are beco-ming more and more international these days.
Kuroi... What do the Japanese do at times like this? Aren't you supposed to feel honor? Duty?Obligation?

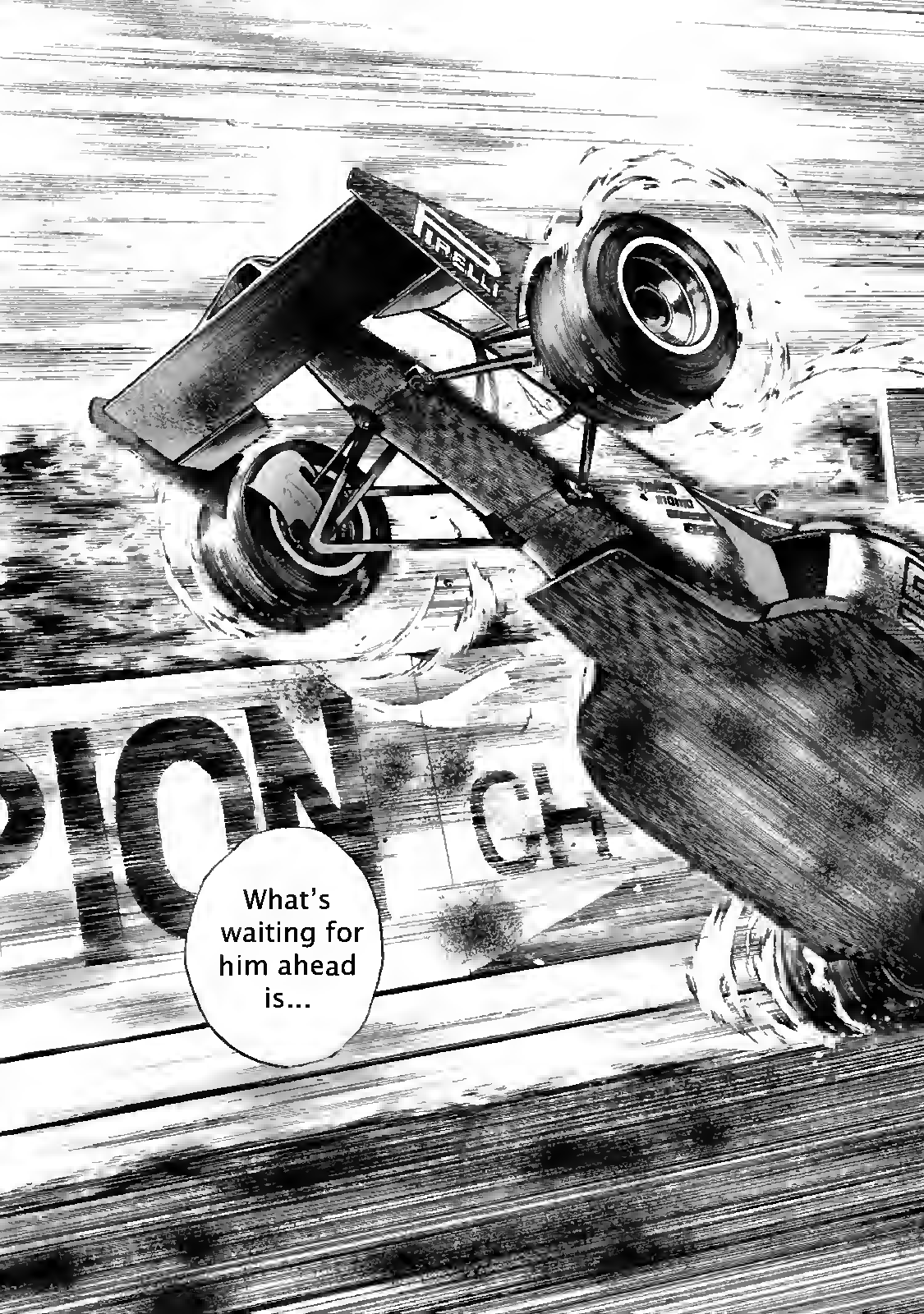
And Tamotsu...
The same way I trust you.
As for me, I trust him. Even if it's blind trust.

It's a fine machine. I'm sure Gunma will learn to appreciate it, bit by bit.
No. He must know it already.
We do have a problem on our hands, though.
That's the fact that Gunma didn't like Tamotsu's car!
It's that black shadow he saw at Spa-Francorchamps the other day!
The problem isn't the car.
But that's not what he thinks!
He sets the bar high for himself, and imagines himself racing ahead. That's what makes him fast!
I heard. It's some sort of manifestation of himself. And Junko told me. it's not something that started recently.
That's why he wants a faster car!
Gunma clearly thinks that the shadow is something real. Something concrete.

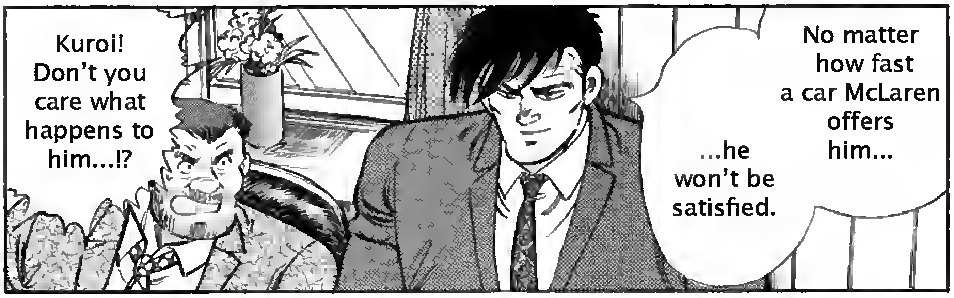
To pass the shadow of himself!
That's right. It's impossible.
But he'll keep chasing it, and he won't stop until he gets there.
That's not even possible! How can you pass yourself!?


And in the end...
What's waiting for him ahead is...
PIRELLI
Marlboro

And in the end...
Marlboro


What's waiting for him ahead is...

And that's why I have faith in him.
He's suicidal!
Ri-dicu-lous!
SLAM


Kuroi! Don't you care what happens to him...!?
...he won't be satisfied.
No matter how fast a car McLaren offers him...

And now, he's trying to get over the last big hurdle.
He is the way he is, overcoming hurdles one at a time.
But that's the kind of path he took to get to where he is.
That's not what I said.

...but he knows it as "the black shadow"!
I don't know what it is...
The... last big hurdle?

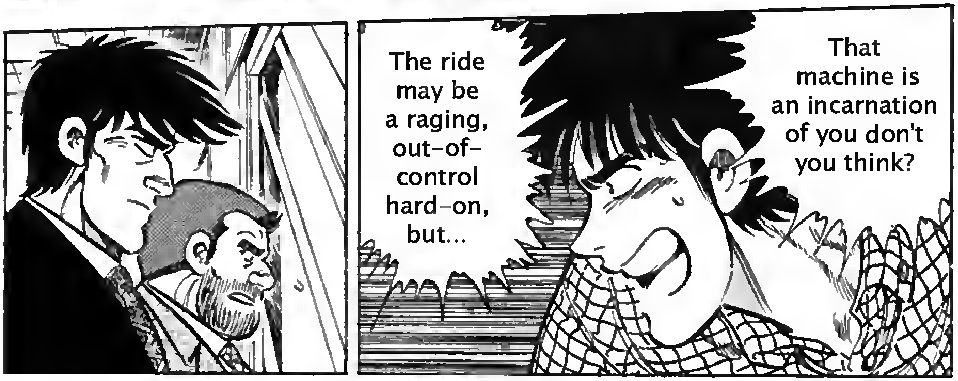
KRR
KRR
RRR
RRR
...
Pfft... a raging, out-of-control hard-on, huh?
You're here...
Gu... Gunma...
Heh. Don't make me laugh.
Explosive energy!? Soaring desire?

PUT
No, man, I'm not really in the mood...
I've been so bored.
Come on, Tamo. Let's play some catch.
Come on, dude!
!!
Listen up!
Hey, cherry boy!
Heh heh ...
WOOSH
I did it with Junko!

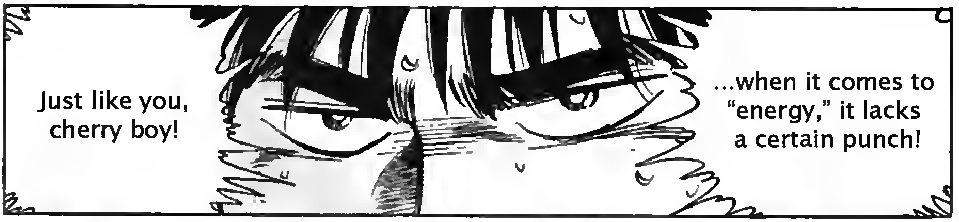
...
PLOP
ROLLL
...!
FWUMP
Good for you...
Well, that's great to hear.
Oh...
Your thoughts?
Well, cherry boy?
You were in love with her too, weren't you?
Heh, sorry dude...
FWIP
Oh. Right.
Pass it back to me!

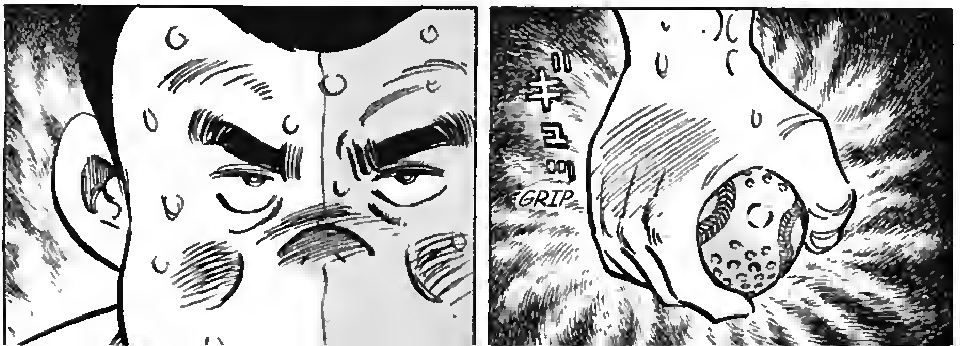
SLAM
ドゴォ
I never, uh... I never really thought about it...
Uh... Well, no...
But that suits you, I guess.
You're still a virgin, after all.
...!?
...
Yo!
Cherry boy!
Wh...what are you sayin', Gunma?
Aren't you jealous that I did it with Junko?

FWAP


The ride may be a raging, out-of-control hard-on, but...
That machine is an incarnation of you don't you think?

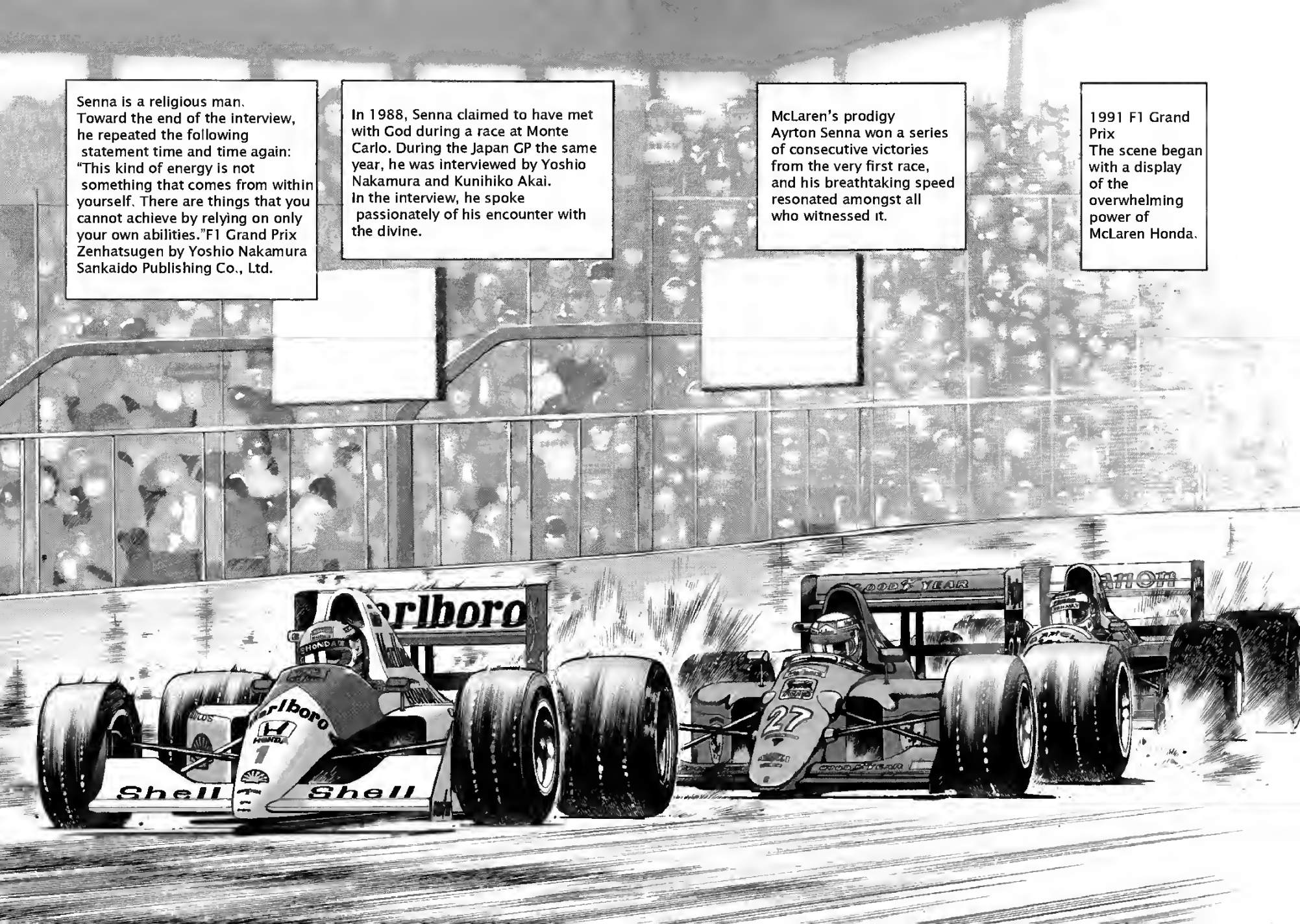
...

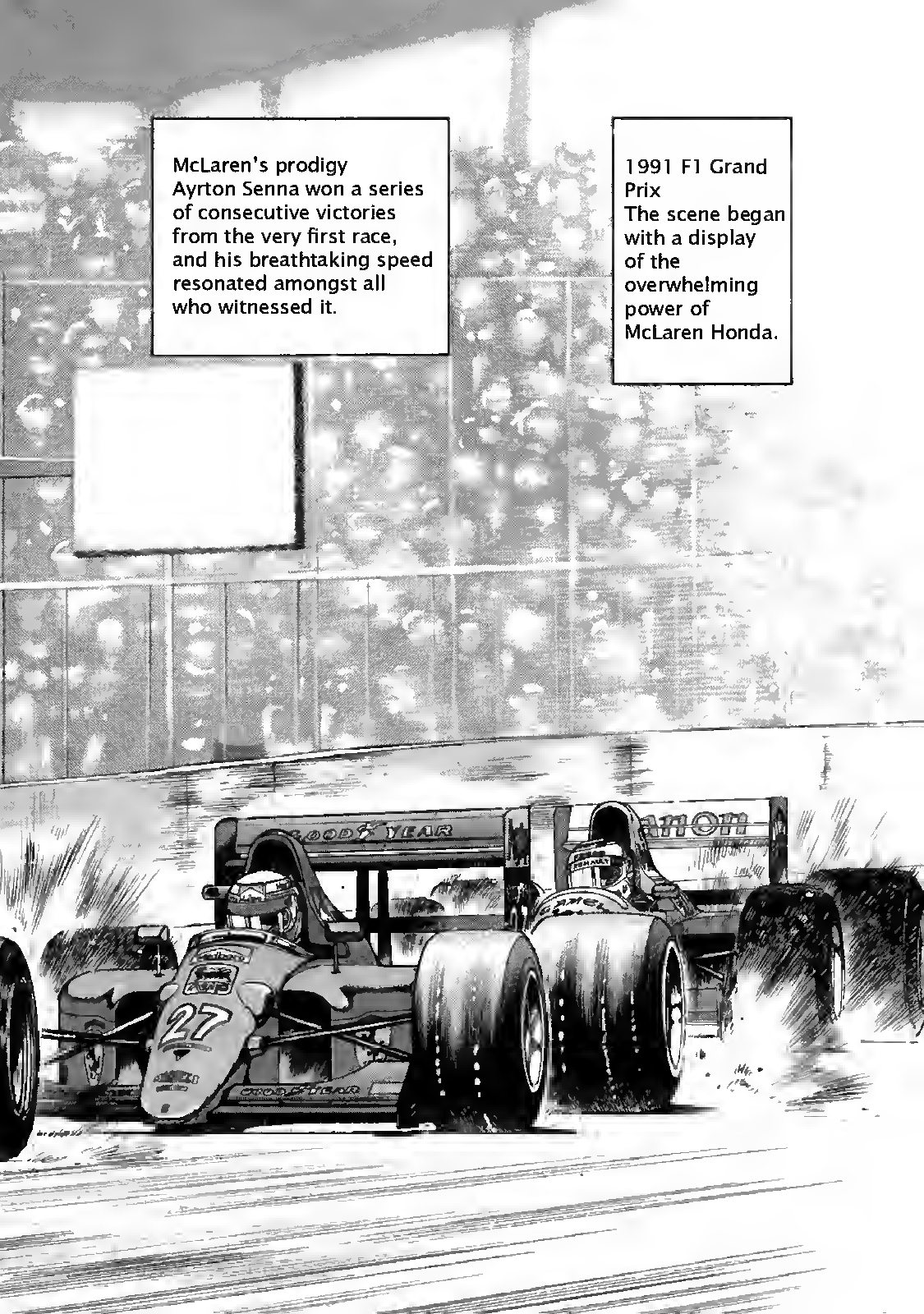

Just like you, cherry boy!
...when it comes to "energy," it lacks a certain punch!


GRIP

BWOOSH
WHAM
!
Hey... You don't wanna piss me off, Gunma...
Don't forget your life is in my hands!
Former Baseball Club Member
THUD
...!
Keep it going'...
Heh ...
STARE
...

Chapter 4:
The Man Who Met God
38
elf
KOBE
KOBE


Senna is a religious man.
Toward the end of the interview, he repeated the following statement time and time again: "This kind of energy is not something that comes from within yourself. There are things that you cannot achieve by relying on only your own abilities."F1 Grand Prix Zenhatsugen by Yoshio Nakamura Sankaido Publishing Co., Ltd.
In 1988, Senna claimed to have met with God during a race at Monte Carlo. During the Japan GP the same year, he was interviewed by Yoshio Nakamura and Kunihiko Akai. In the interview, he spoke passionately of his encounter with the divine.
McLaren's prodigy Ayrton Senna won a series of consecutive victories from the very first race, and his breathtaking speed resonated amongst all who witnessed it.
1991 F1 Grand Prix
The scene began with a display of the overwhelming power of McLaren Honda.
Marlboro
HONDA
Shell
GOODYEAR
27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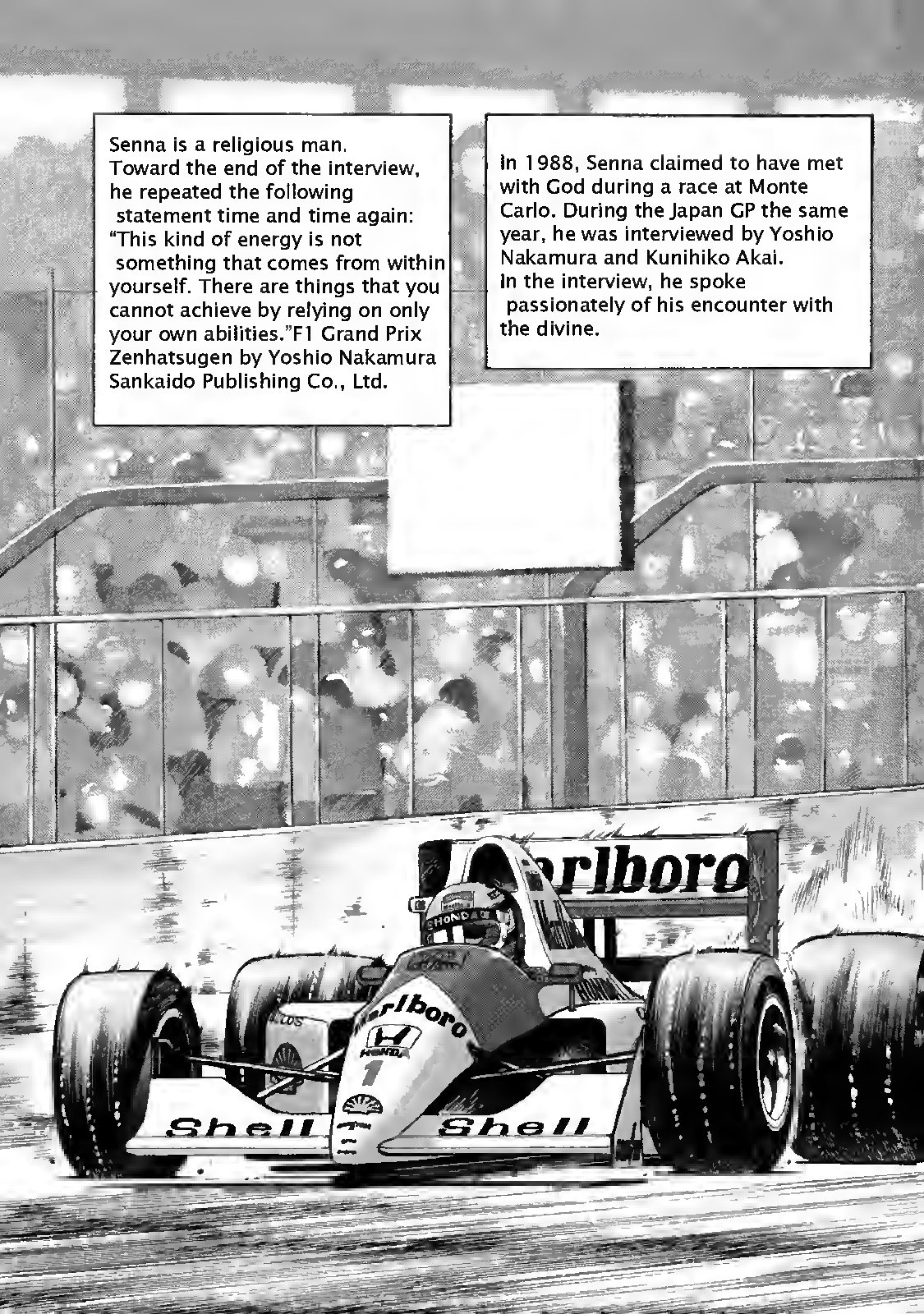
GOODYEAR
27
GOODYEAR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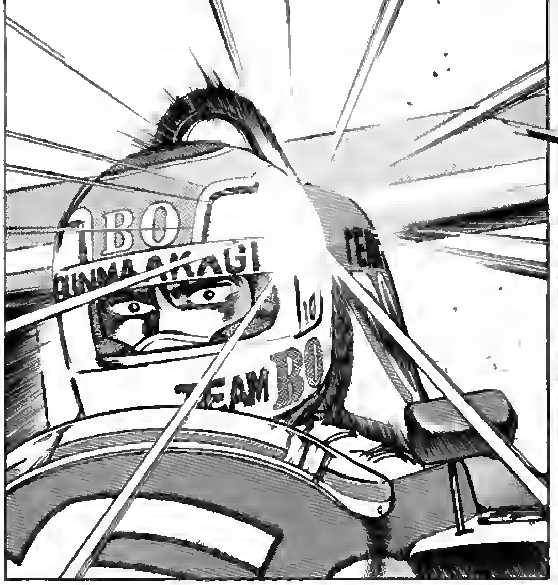
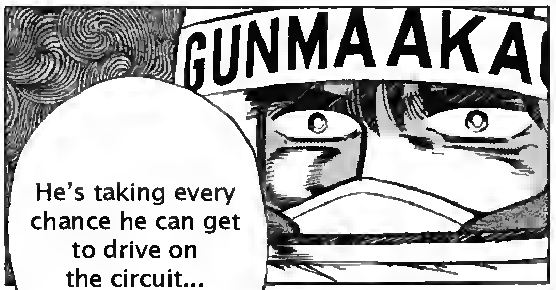
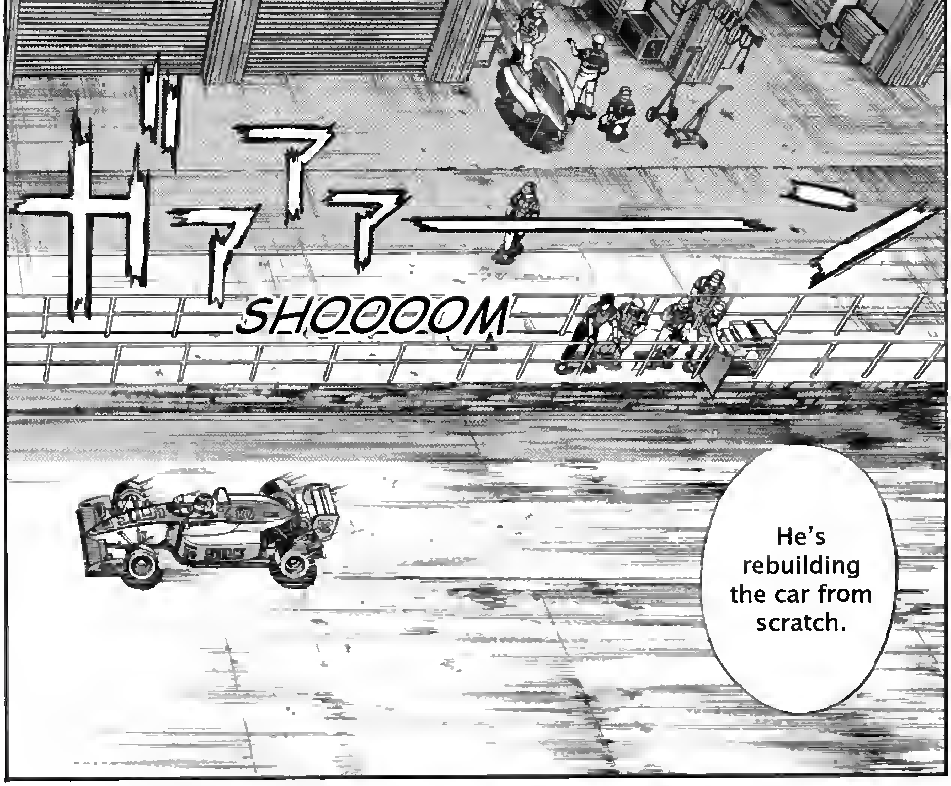
Marlboro
HONDA
Marlboro
HONDA
1
Shell
Shell


GUNMA AKAGI
TEAM BO

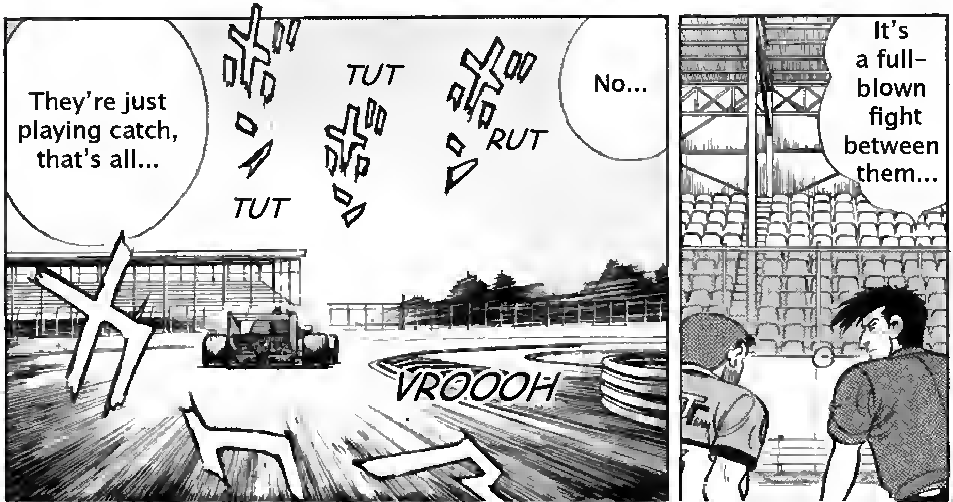
VRRR
VOOOOOH
Gunma seems to be in the right mood today, doesn't he?


GUNMA AKAGI
He's taking every chance he can get to drive on the circuit...

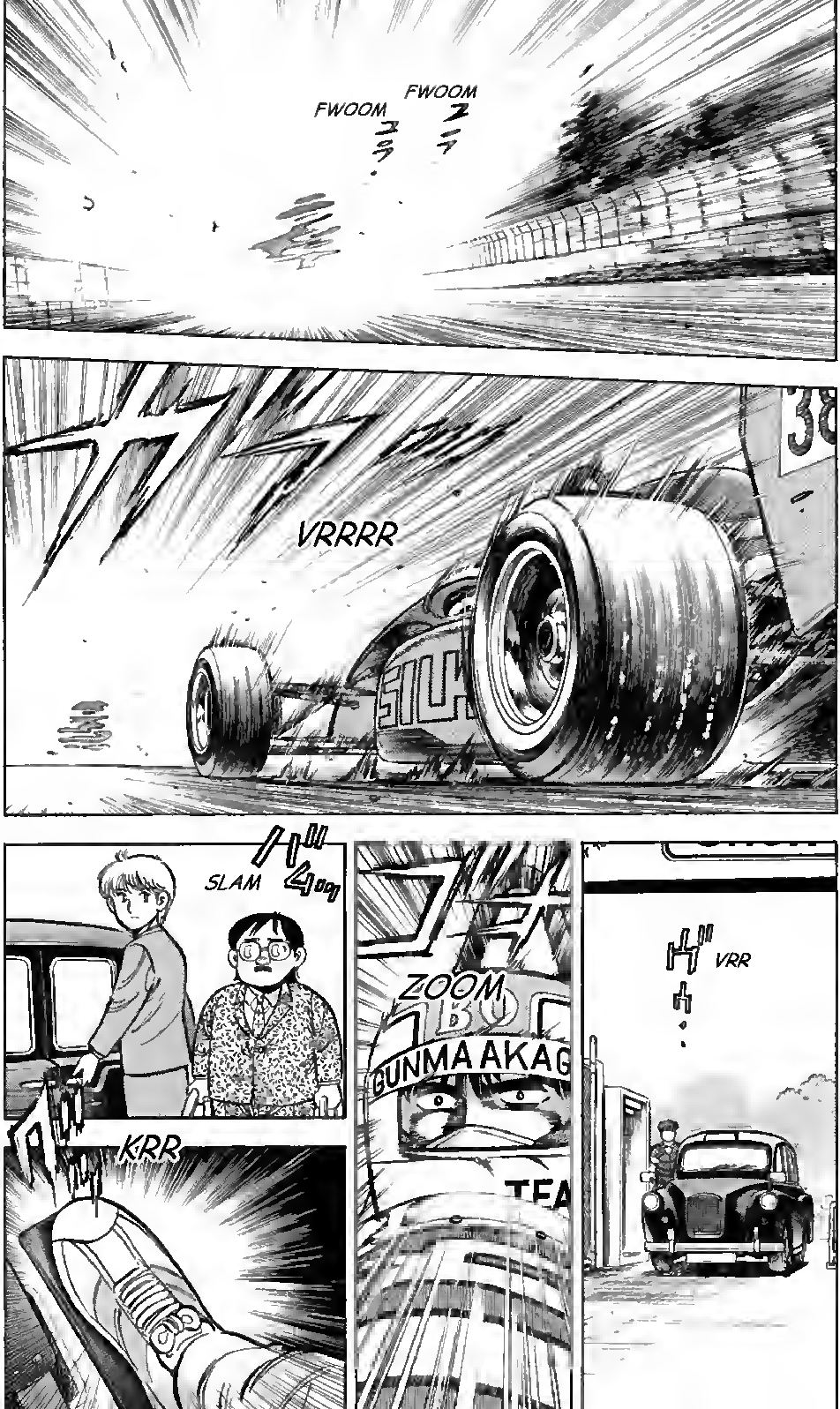
WOOSH
It's not just Gunma... It's [illegible] too...

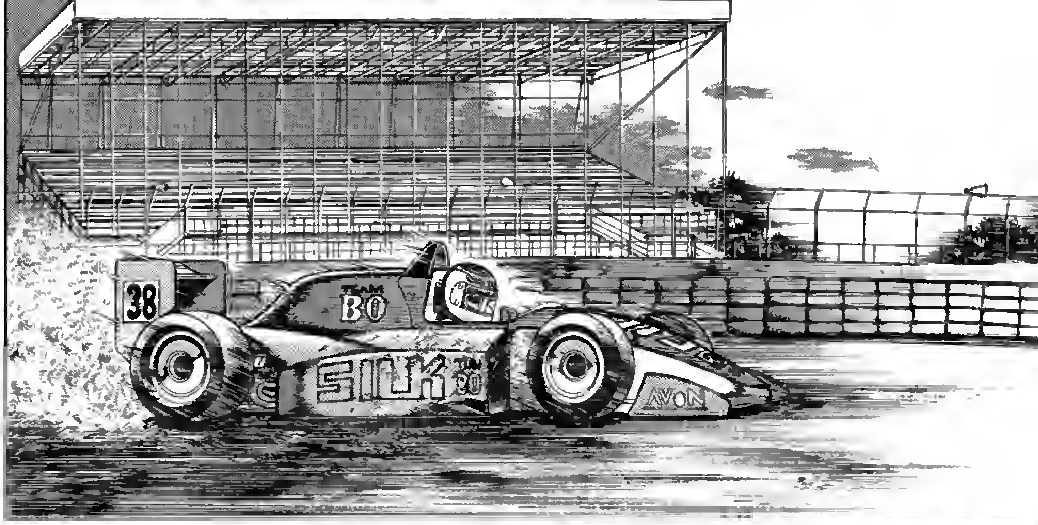

SHOOOOM
He's rebuilding the car from scratch.

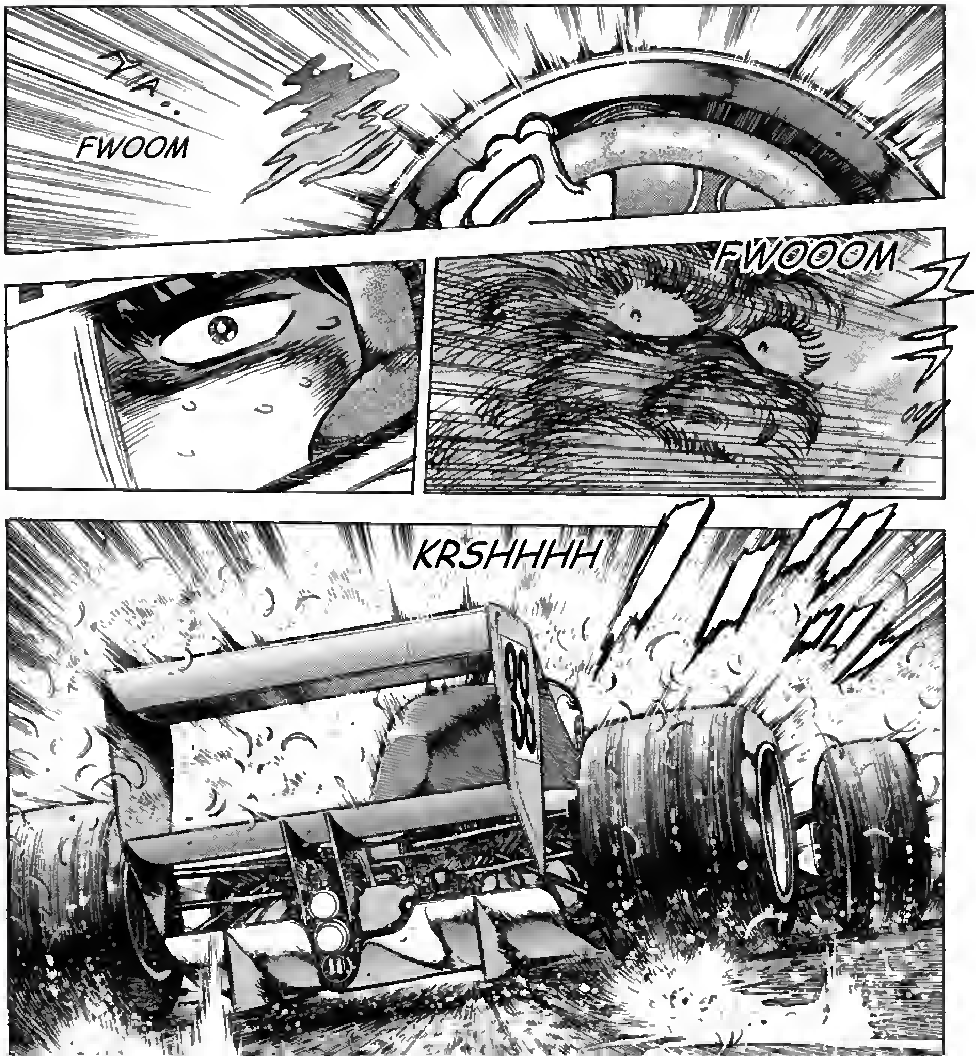
On top of that, he's going to repackage the whole thing, removing as much air resistance as possible. He wants to shove it in Gunma's face.
He's taking apart the engine and bumping up the horse-power by several percent.


They're just playing catch, that's all...
TUT
TUT
RUT
No...
VROOOH
It's a full-blown fight between them...

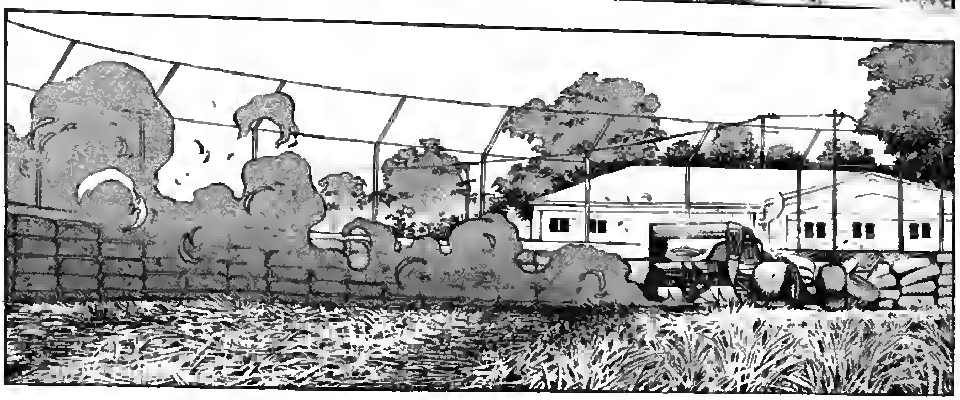
I'm going to take the opportunity to do some sightseeing.
Besides, I still have personal interest in the research I've been doing since I was a student.
And more than anything...
I've missed you! Thanks for coming all this way.
Don't worry about it.
Mr. Kishida, you're ...
...a psychiatrist now, aren't you?
...I'm worried about Gunma.
A black...
... shadow, huh?
As a clinician, I'm still a novice. But yes.

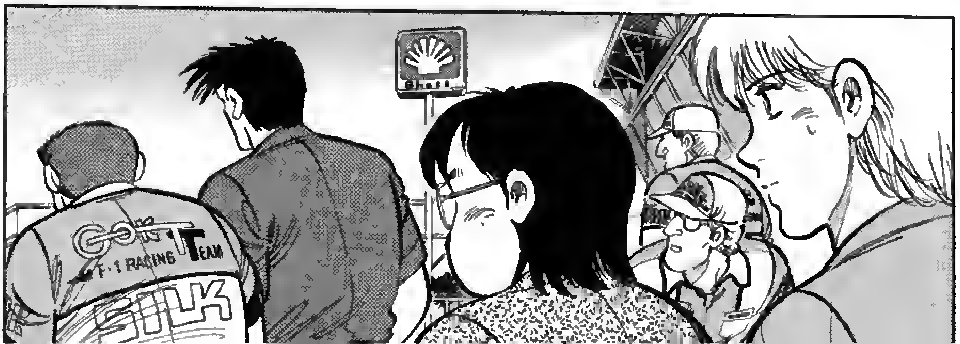

FWOOM
FWOOM
VRRRR
SLAM
ZOOM
GUNMA AKAG
KRR
VRR

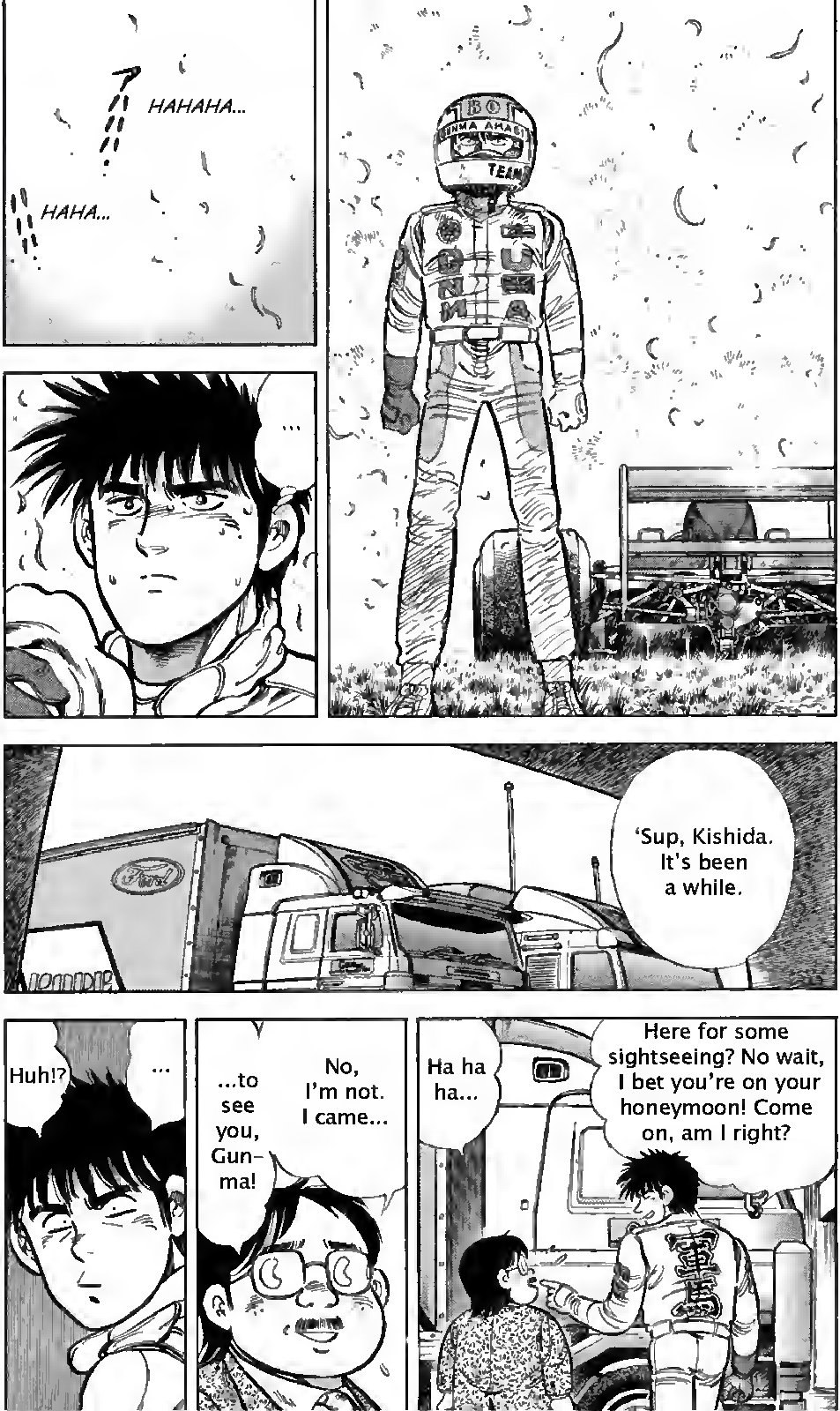

38
Team
BO
SILK
AVON


FWOOM
FWOOOM
KRSHHHH
86

GUNMA
GUNMA!!

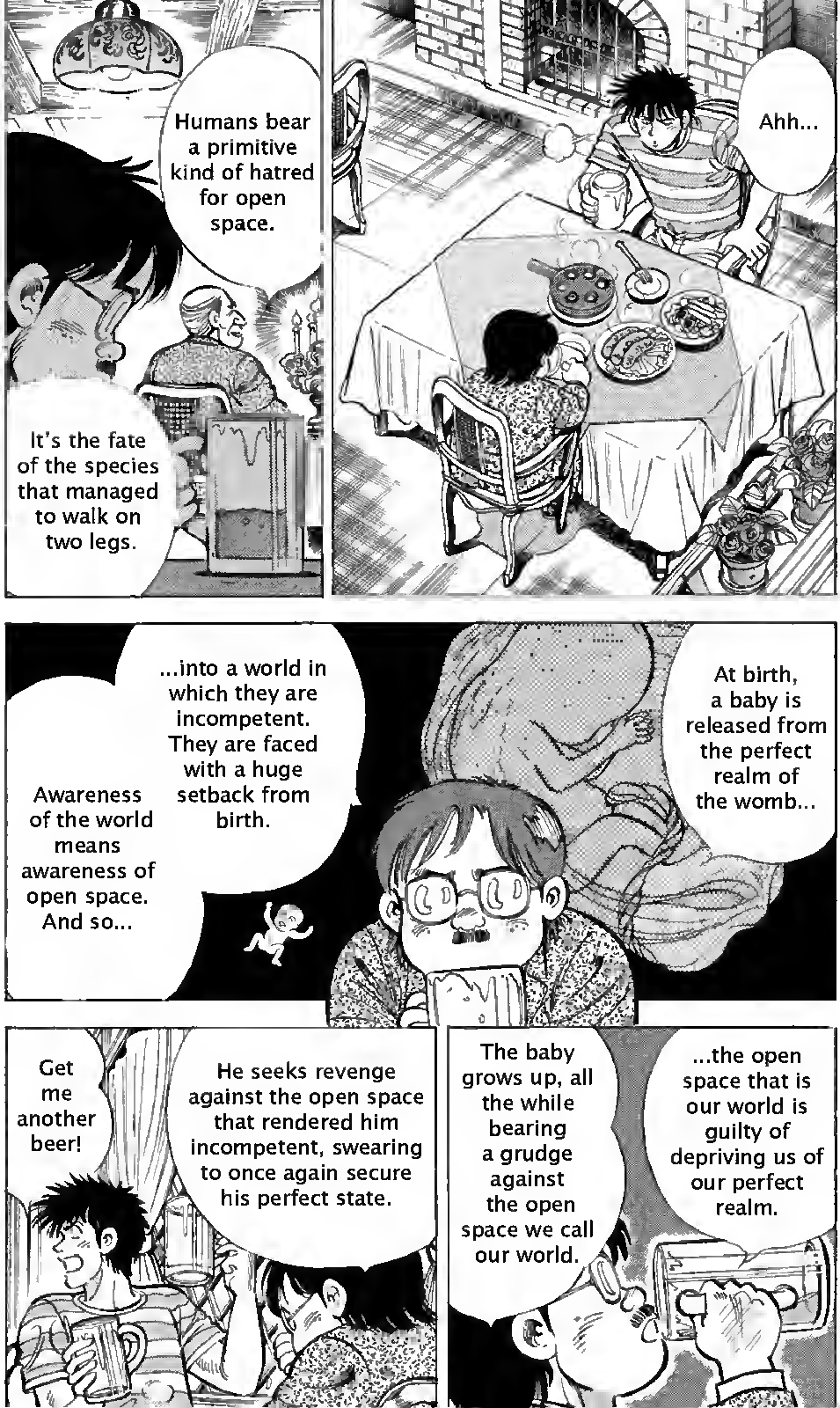


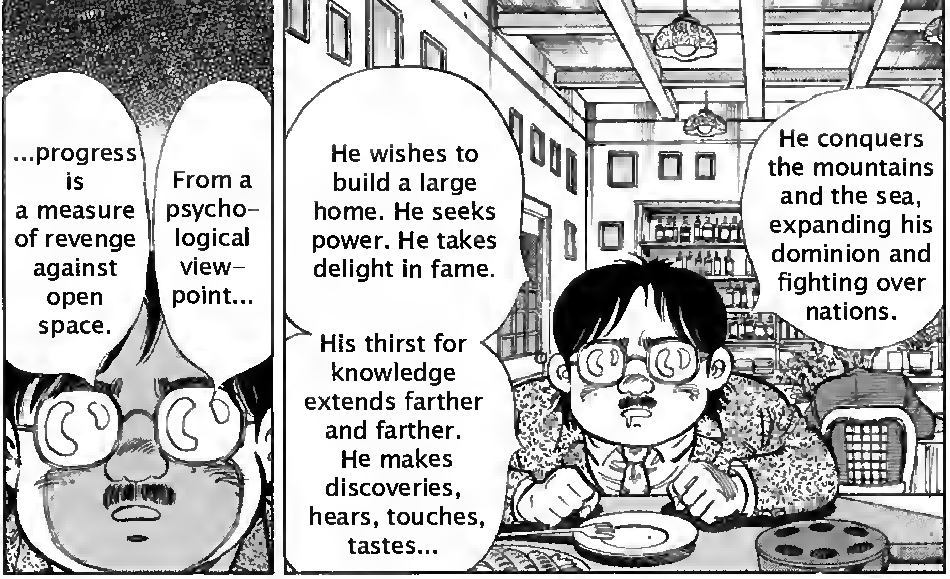

F-1 RACING TEAM
SILK

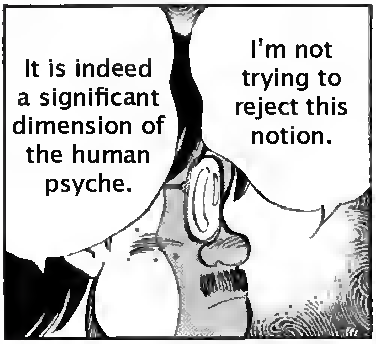

HAHAHA...
HAHA...
...
GUNMA
'Sup, Kishida. It's been a while.
Huh!?
...
...to see you, Gun-ma!
No, I'm not. I came...
Ha ha ha...
Here for some sightseeing? No wait, I bet you're on your honeymoon! Come on, am I right?

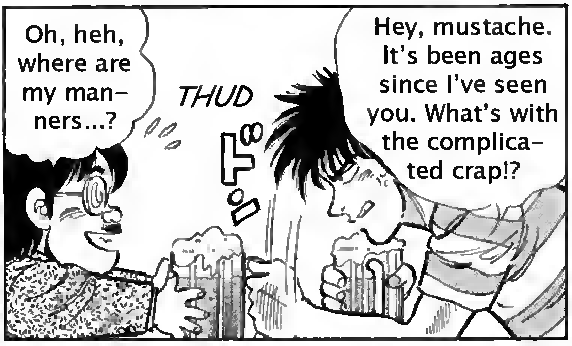
Well, no. I made an overdue visit to Komori Manor...
What!? Yer tellin' me Junko called you out here!?
The truth is, Junko has been very worried.
She's worried about this black shadow you say you've been seeing.
Tsk. Dumb old hag.
...and Granny showed me a letter Junko wrote to her.
Sure.
I know a good place to eat nearby. Wanna go?
SLAM
Appar-ently, he met God.
Oh, right. Senna.
You don't know Senna? Ayrton Senna from McLaren!
Who's that?
You know, Ayrton Senna apparently ...

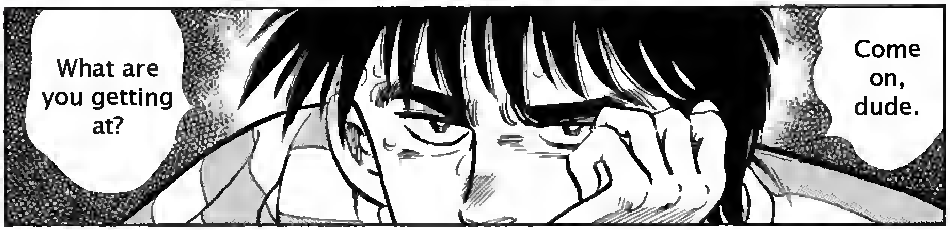
...
...he encountered a great presence that guided him, encouraged him, and stirred him up.
In 1988, when he took the lead at Monte Carlo...
It's a devil!
Mine's no god.
カラン
CLANK
For you, Gunma, it's that black shadow...
No...
Apparently, geniuses all have the same kind of experiences.
A devil...
!
All right, drink up! Let's get wasted!
Don't hold back. Order what you like! It's been too long, dude. You got the bill, right?
...
Or maybe it's Death...

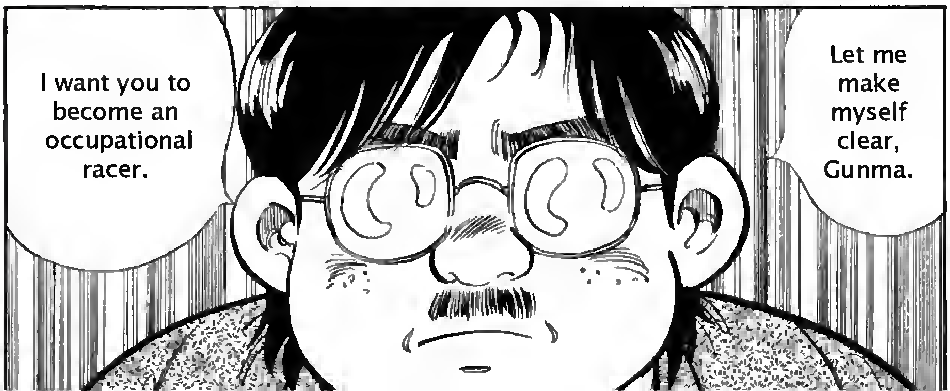

Humans bear a primitive kind of hatred for open space.
It's the fate of the species that managed to walk on two legs.
Ahh...
At birth, a baby is released from the perfect realm of the womb...
...into a world in which they are incompetent. They are faced with a huge setback from birth.
Awareness of the world means awareness of open space. And so...
Get me another beer!
He seeks revenge against the open space that rendered him incompetent, swearing to once again secure his perfect state.
The baby grows up, all the while bearing a grudge against the open space we call our world.
...the open space that is our world is guilty of depriving us of our perfect realm.


...progress is a measure of revenge against open space.
From a psycho-logical view-point...
He wishes to build a large home. He seeks power. He takes delight in fame.
His thirst for knowledge extends farther and farther. He makes discoveries, hears, touches, tastes...
He conquers the mountains and the sea, expanding his dominion and fighting over nations.

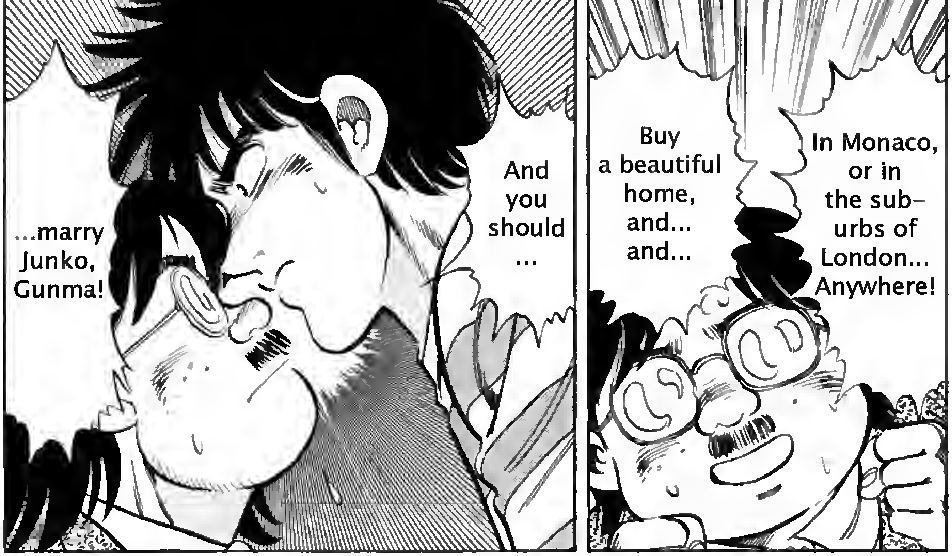

It is indeed a significant dimension of the human psyche.
I'm not trying to reject this notion.

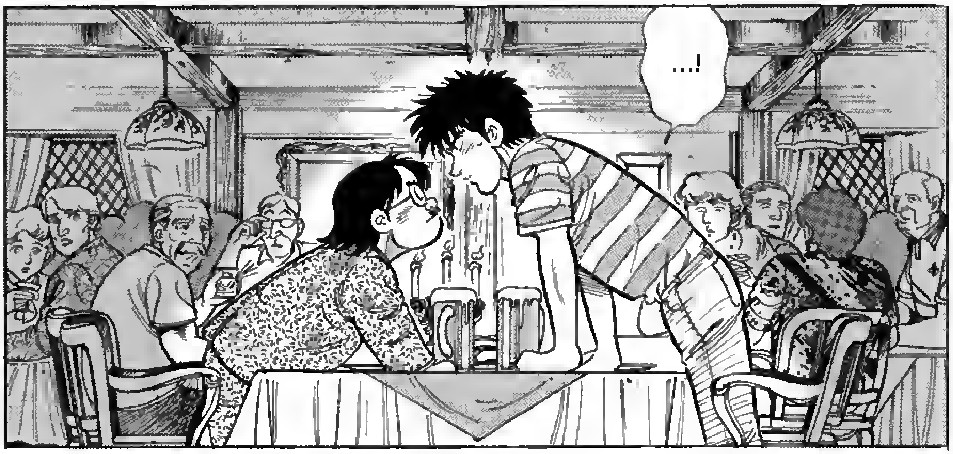

Oh, heh, where are my man-ners...?
THUD
ドゥ
Hey, mustache. It's been ages since I've seen you. What's with the complica-ted crap!?

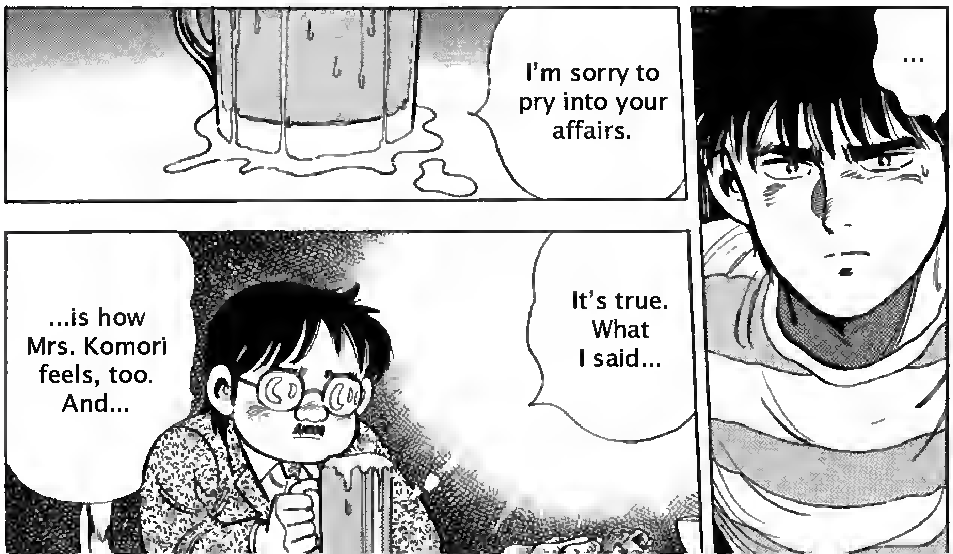

What are you getting at?
Come on, dude.


I want you to become an occupational racer.
Let me make myself clear, Gunma.

You must not try and pass the black shadow!
Human beings cannot become gods!
!?
Go for the F1 champion title! Live your dream, make money, and build a happy family!
Like Senna, Prost, Alesi... and Jesus...
The only beings you need pass are the other racers on the circuit!
Heh, you little...
...
B...buy yourself a nice house, Gunma. A nice house!
That old Komori hag got you to do this, didn't she!?


...marry Junko, Gunma!
And you should ...
Buy a beautiful home, and... and...
In Monaco, or in the sub-urbs of London... Anywhere!


...!


I'm sorry to pry into your affairs.
...
It's true. What I said...
...is how Mrs. Komori feels, too. And...

You only accept the smallest bit of pocket money...
They tell me you don't accept prize money or contract money!
Mr. Orman has been sending Mrs. Komori a lot of letters.
...it's what Mr. Kuroi and Mr. Orman want, too.
But haven't you always been poor!?
I grew up in a rich family. I don't give a crap about money!
Hmph.
Who cares!?
In any case ...
THUD
...for being poor!
Well, excuse me ...
Why not!?
But ...
...marry Junko!
I can't...

But you... You two are...
Just be-cause!
KA-TUNK
Happiness is not the right path.
He's right.
Heh heh heh...
...a murde-rer!
Not for...
Otoya...!?
...

Chapter 5: Old Wounds

Otoya ...
A... mur- derer!?
What do you mean... ..." a mur- derer"!?
...that little kid, didn't you!?
You killed...
PFOO
Don't play dumb...
Heh heh heh...

I'm a big fan of yours, so I did my research.
That little kid named Peabow!

You pretended to reconcile with him, and you tempted him into racing...
That little kid slept with that lover of yours, Junko.
So you came up with a way to kill him legally.

I really am a huge fan of yours.
You know...

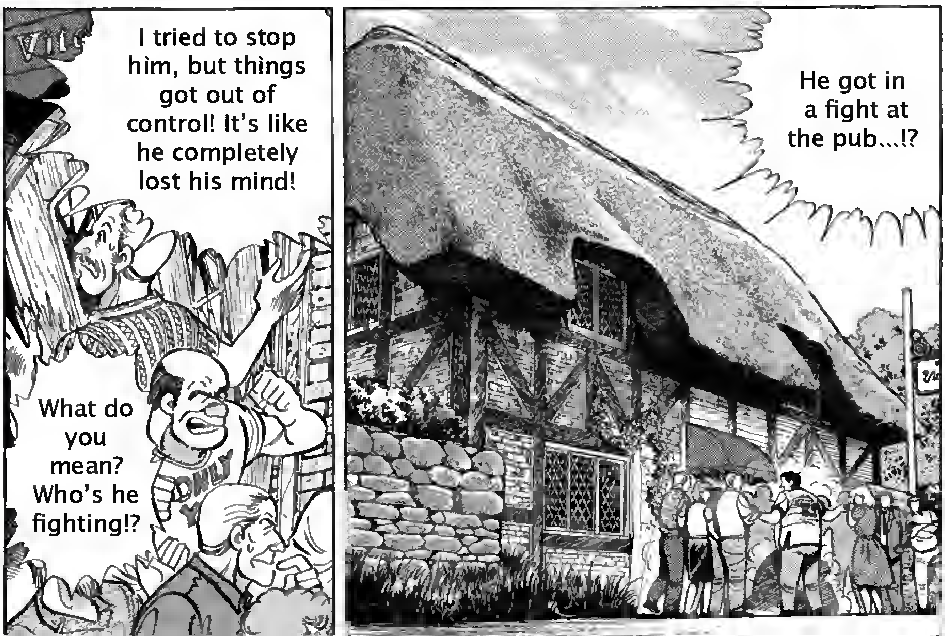
What the hell are you tryin' to say!?
Hey...

Is it technique? Is it your car? Or is the secret in your mentality!?
I wanted to learn the secret to your speed.
I was able to come to this conclusion.
When I was younger, I always thought I could beat you. I was confident in my own way.
I've wondered and wondered...
...how you could be so fast. This is the truth.
But every time I raced with you, you put me in my place.
...is misery!
The secret to your... to Gunma Akagi's speed...
You're like an internal-combustion engine, burning a fuel called misery!
Misery made you fast.

What did you just say!? Come on. What are you sayin', dude?
You're trying to tell me... that I killed Peabow!?
Hold on...
Otoya ...
The "sorrow" from all that is what keeps your wheels spinning!
You pushed Yuki to her death, you destroyed Sako mentally, and you made Peabow crash to his death.
CRASH
Gunma!
You bastard ...
Following your pattern, I'm guessing your next victim is Junko. Am I right!?

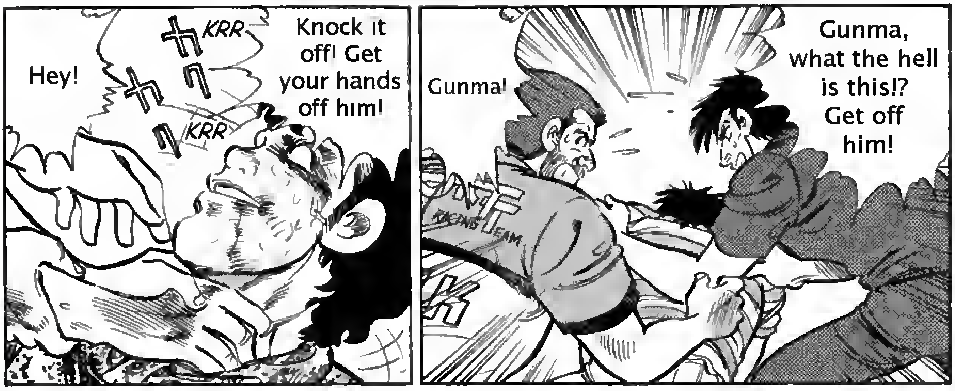
It's Gunma! He... he's...
This is bad...
Oh, no...

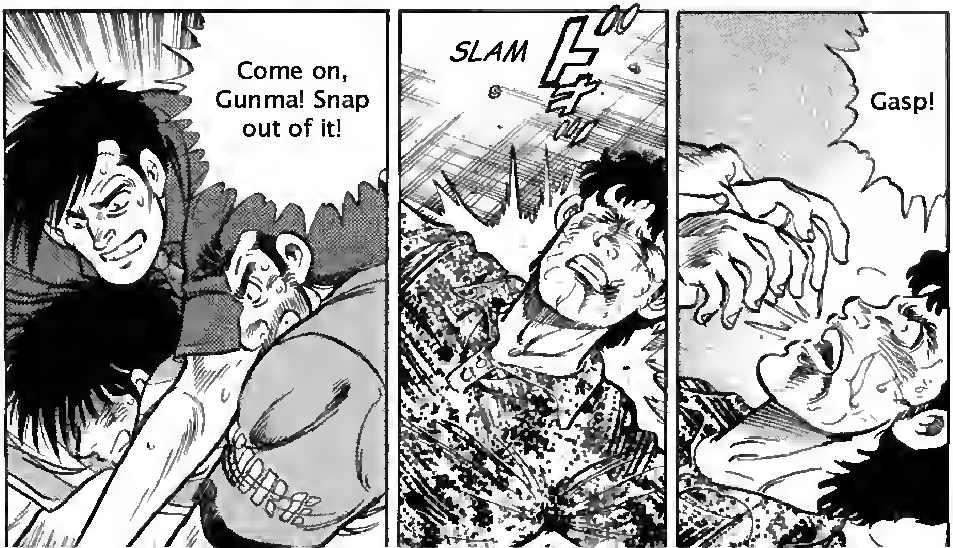
H... Huh!?


I tried to stop him, but things got out of control! It's like he completely lost his mind!
What do you mean? Who's he fighting!?
He got in a fight at the pub...!?

!?
... Otoya Yama-guchi!
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
I think his name was...
YAK
YAK
Hah hah! Let them go at it!
Bloody hell! Wild drunks... Japanese blokes are the worst!
Stop it! You're killing each other!
Tell the truth, man. The truth...
You couldn't forgive that poor little kid, could you?
BAM
BAM

Out of the way!
Move it!
I'm gonna kill you!
GRIP
I'm ...
...so you could kill him...
You taught him how to race...


Hey!
KRR
KRR
Knock it off! Get your hands off him!
Gunma!
Gunma, what the hell is this!? Get off him!


Come on, Gunma! Snap out of it!
SLAM
Gasp!

...
Gunma ...!
G... Gunma!
Keh...
Take him away, quick! I'll take care of the rest! Hurry!
...
MURMUR
...
I have a lot of respect for you, Gunma!
Gah hah hah hah hah hah...
HAH HAH HAH
HAH HAH HAH HAH
HAH HAH HAH
Keh heh... Hah hah hah...
Keh heh heh...

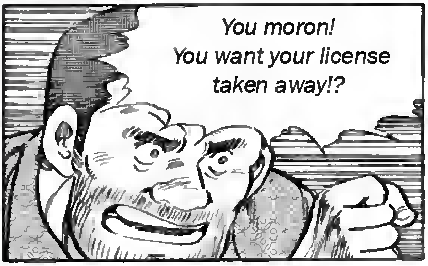
HAH HAH HAH HAH
VRRROO
HAH HAH HAH HAH
HONK
HONK

KACHUK
...
KACHIK
Leave anything that'll remind him of those two.
KACHUK
We only need to take Gunma's stuff.
Let's get everything together quick.
He doesn't have much stuff here...
I'm on it.
...
Just some stupid crap, I bet.
Hey, Mr. Kuroi. What do you think Otoya Yamaguchi said to Gunma?

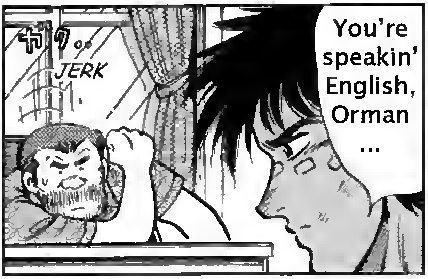
...
Basically, Otoya was trying to reopen old wounds.
Kishida said he heard bits of it.
We'll worry about that later.
Won't Gunma be angry that we're moving him out of here without telling him?
...this room is like a skid mark on the road...
After all, to him...
...we have to get Gunma's head out of the past.
At any rate ...
It's better if he moves out of this place.

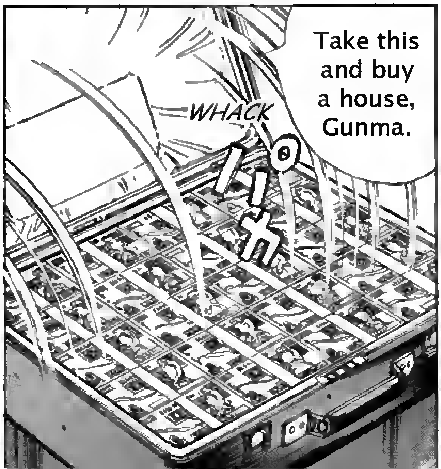
Probably Sako's. Toss it.
!
A ring...
CLUNK
コロ
Huh?
I'm not worried about that. It's just that... To throw away every memory of Sako...
It doesn't look that valuable. Just toss it.
But...
He needs to distance himself from his past, for your sake as well as his.
Junko ...
...
SFT
フ
If you can understand that, then toss it.
Okay ...

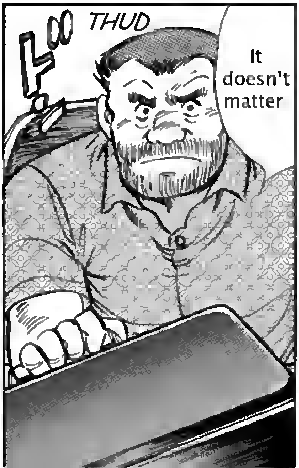
...but over here, it makes you look like a worthless human being with no self-control!
In Japan, they might just blame the alcohol and let you off...
In Europe, being a violent drunk is a sure way to get everyone to hate you!


You moron! You want your license taken away!?

GREEN MIND


JERK
You're speakin' English, Orman ...


WHACK
Take this and buy a house, Gunma.


THUD
It doesn't matter

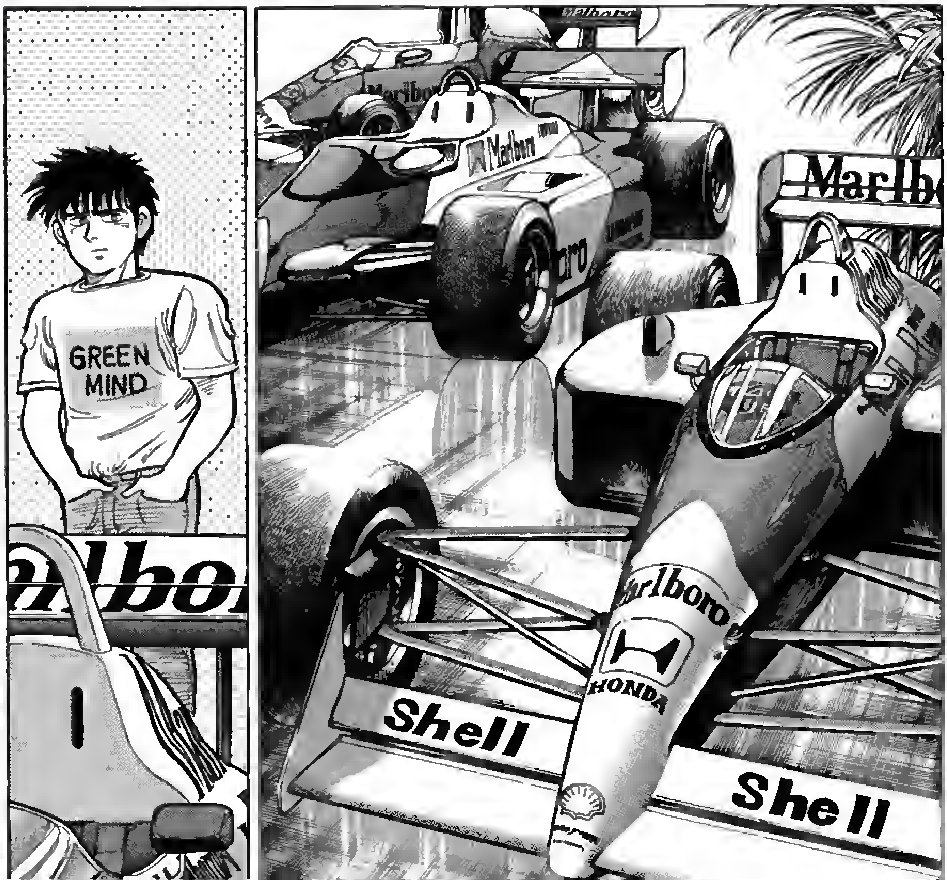
Take it.
This is your money, anyway.
It's not for you! It's for Junko's sake!
I don't want no house.
GREEN MIND
Your next victim is Junko. Am I right!?
Is it Ron Dennis!?
I gotta go meet someone. I'm takin' the car.
Where are you going!?
I'll think about it.
...
GREEN MIND
How's 400 km/h sound!?
Yeah, I do...
Do you want to drive a faster car that bad!?
And what if it is?

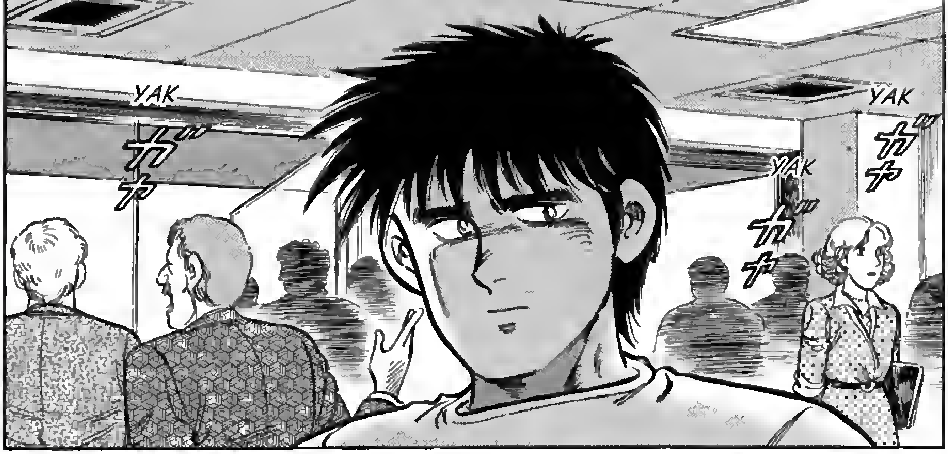
400 km/h!?
F... F...
HAH HAH HAH HAH
HAH HAH HAH HAH
GREEN MIND
VROOM
WHIRRR
SLAM
And then every-thing will...
Just you wait. I'm gonna pass you.

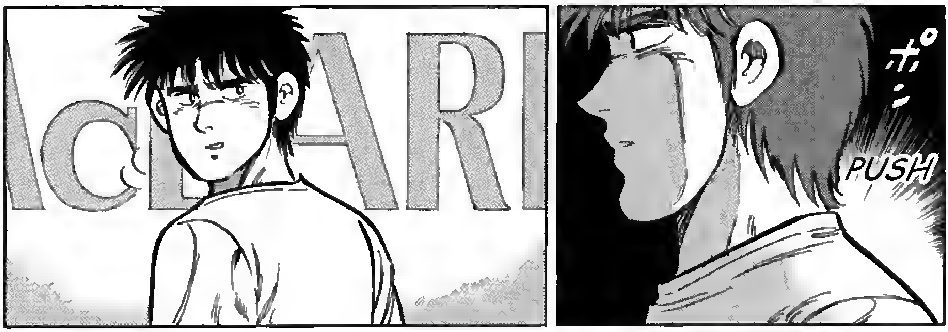
SCREETCH
KRRT
SCREE
KRR
ZOOM

Chapter 6:
The Untouchable Horizon

Thanks for coming. I've been wanting to get acquainted.
Wait while I get ready. Let's grab something to eat.

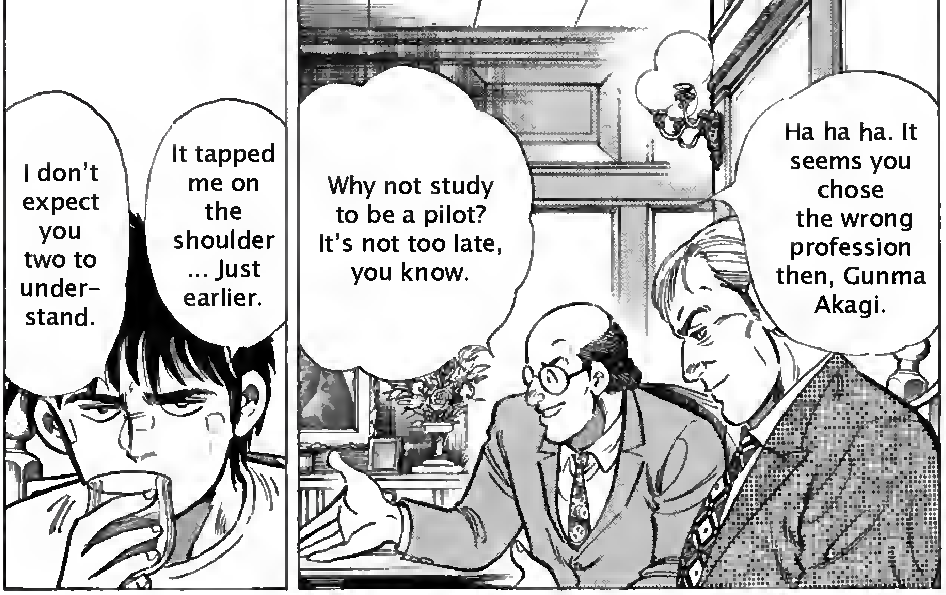

GREEN MIND
Marlboro
HONDA
Shell
Shell

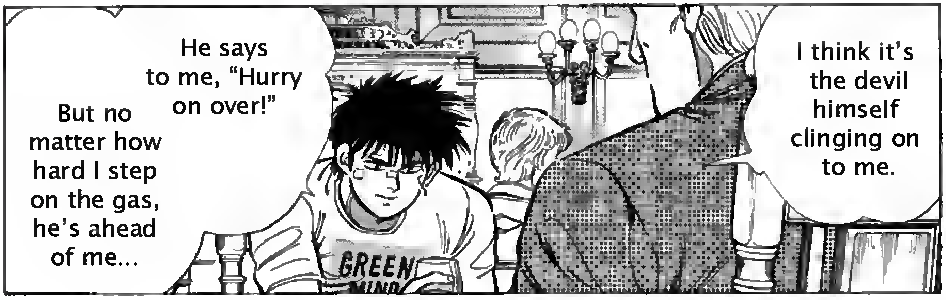

YAK
YAK
YAK

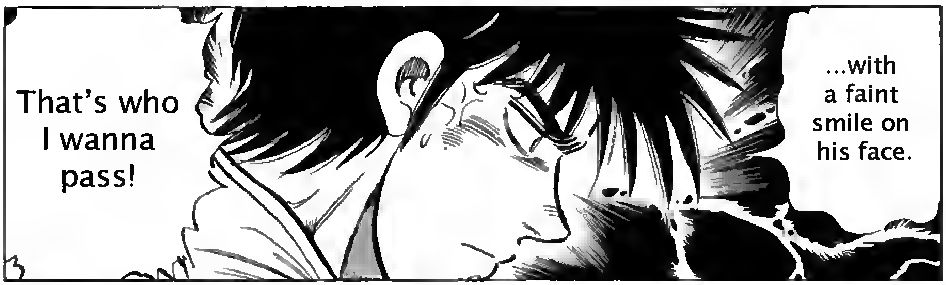

PUSH

Sorry to keep you waiting, Mr. Gunma Akagi. The roast beef here is to die for.
MASON
...!?
GREEN MIND

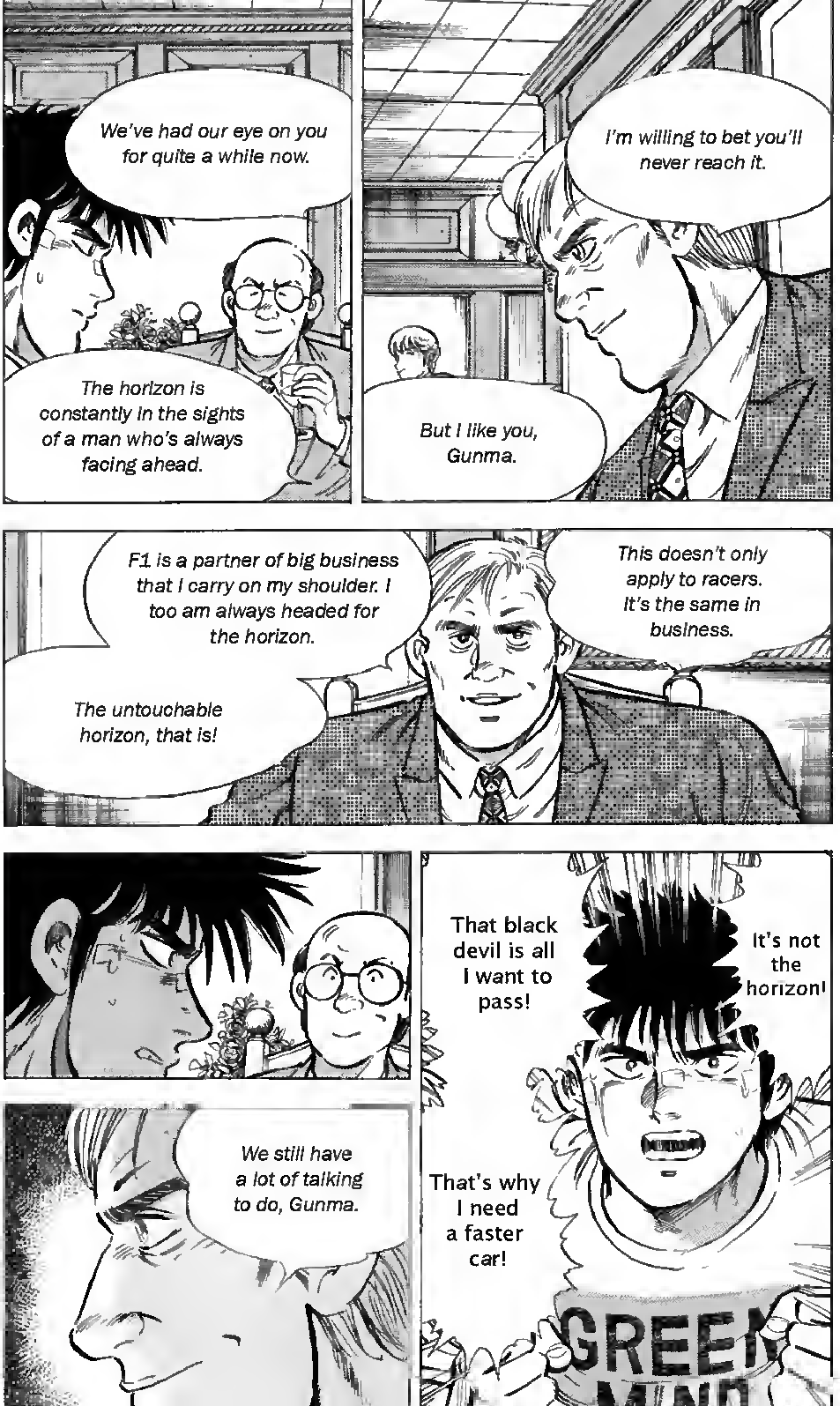
Well, are you up for it?
I wanna hit 400 km/h.
...
No, even faster. I wanna drive a car that's absurdly fast.
MUNCH
もぐもぐ
MUNCH
WHISPER
ボソボソ

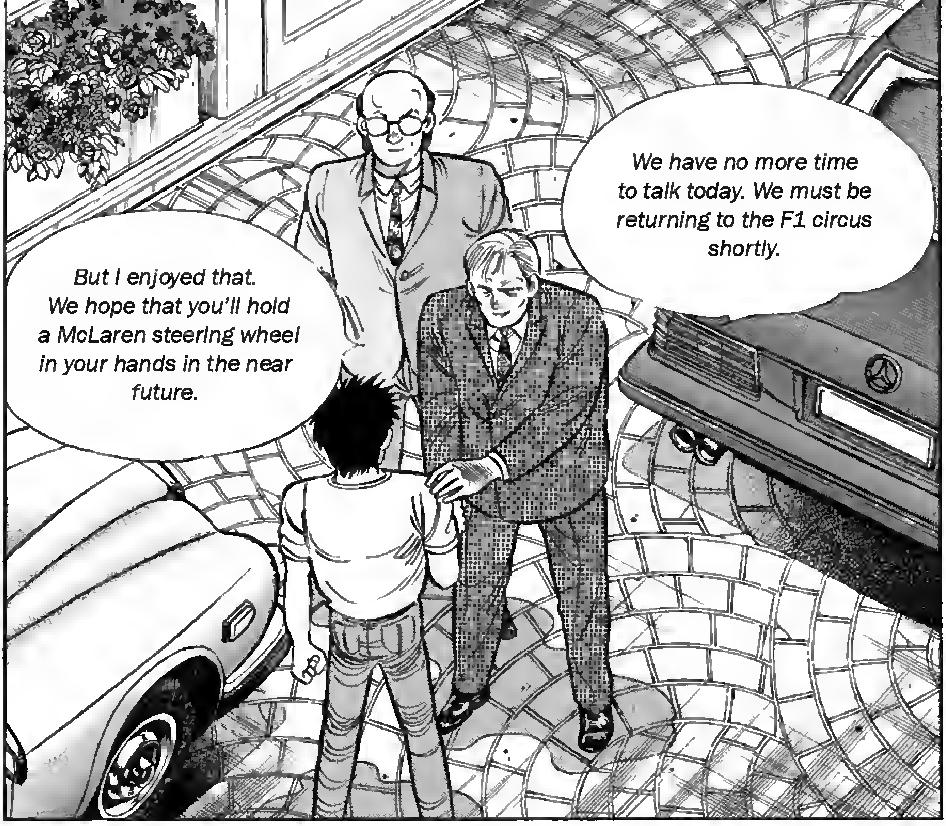

I don't expect you two to under-stand.
It tapped me on the shoulder ... Just earlier.
Why not study to be a pilot? It's not too late, you know.
Ha ha ha. It seems you chose the wrong profession then, Gunma Akagi.

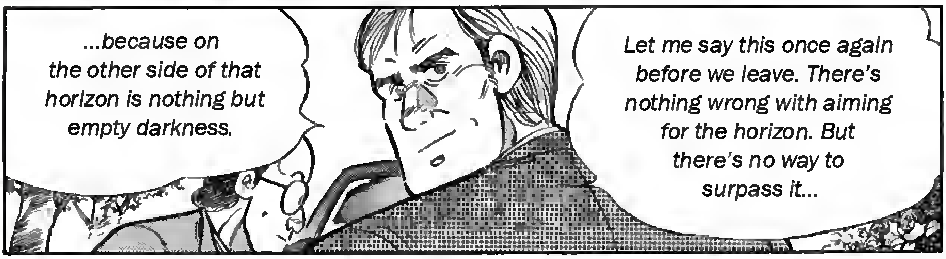

But no matter how hard I step on the gas, he's ahead of me...
He says to me, "Hurry on over!"
I think it's the devil himself clinging on to me.


That's who I wanna pass!
...with a faint smile on his face.

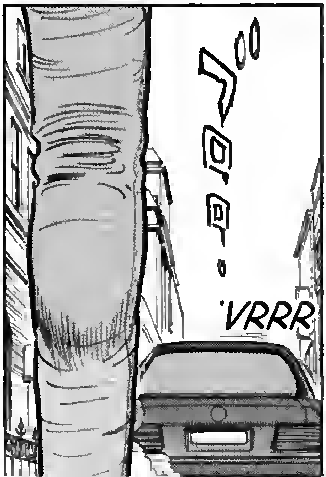
The thing you've been chasing... I bet it's...
...the horizon!
Gunma Akagi...
...


We've had our eye on you for quite a while now.
The horizon is constantly in the sights of a man who's always facing ahead.
I'm willing to bet you'll never reach it.
But I like you, Gunma.
F1 is a partner of big business that I carry on my shoulder. I too am always headed for the horizon.
The untouchable horizon, that is!
This doesn't only apply to racers. It's the same in business.
That black devil is all I want to pass!
It's not the horizon!
That's why I need a faster car!
We still have a lot of talking to do, Gunma.
GREEN


But I enjoyed that. We hope that you'll hold a McLaren steering wheel in your hands in the near future.
We have no more time to talk today. We must be returning to the F1 circus shortly.


...because on the other side of that horizon is nothing but empty darkness.
Let me say this once again before we leave. There's nothing wrong with aiming for the horizon. But there's no way to surpass it...

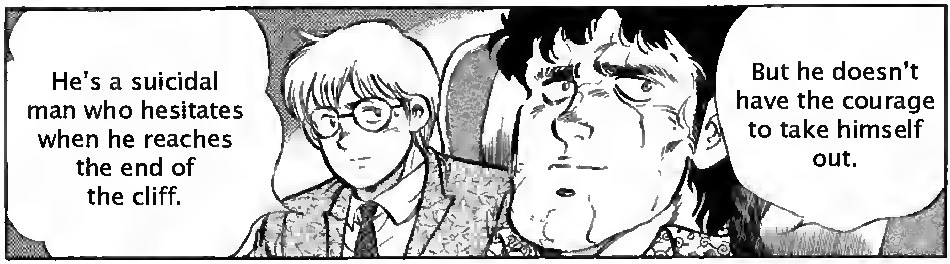
...
GREEN MIND


VRRR

AIR FRANCE
I heard you went at it with Gunma.
We received a complaint from his team by phone at the London office.

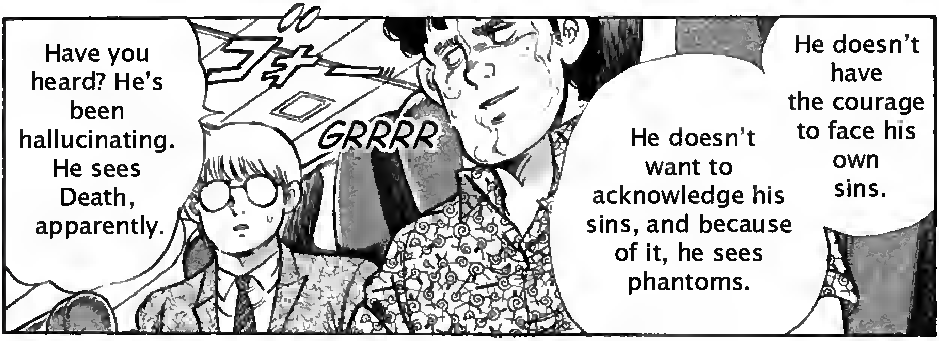
...after bringing misfor-tune to so many people.
The guy is trying to destroy himself...

What did you say to him?

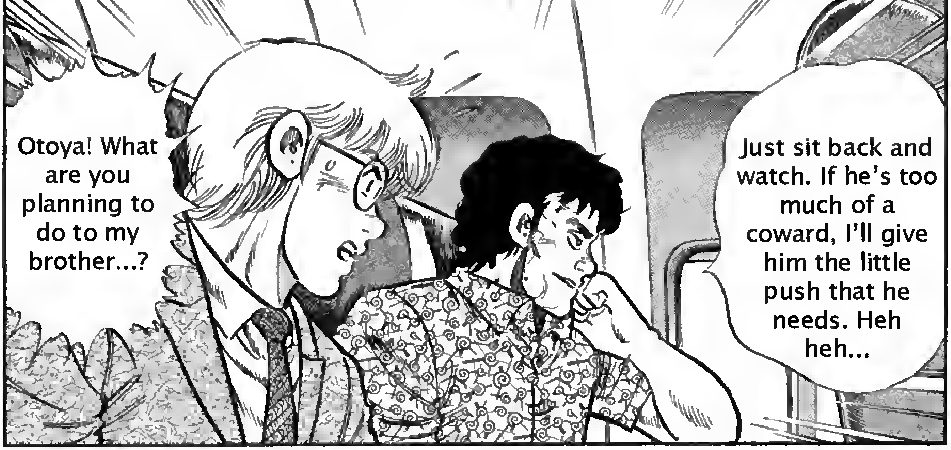

He's a suicidal man who hesitates when he reaches the end of the cliff.
But he doesn't have the courage to take himself out.

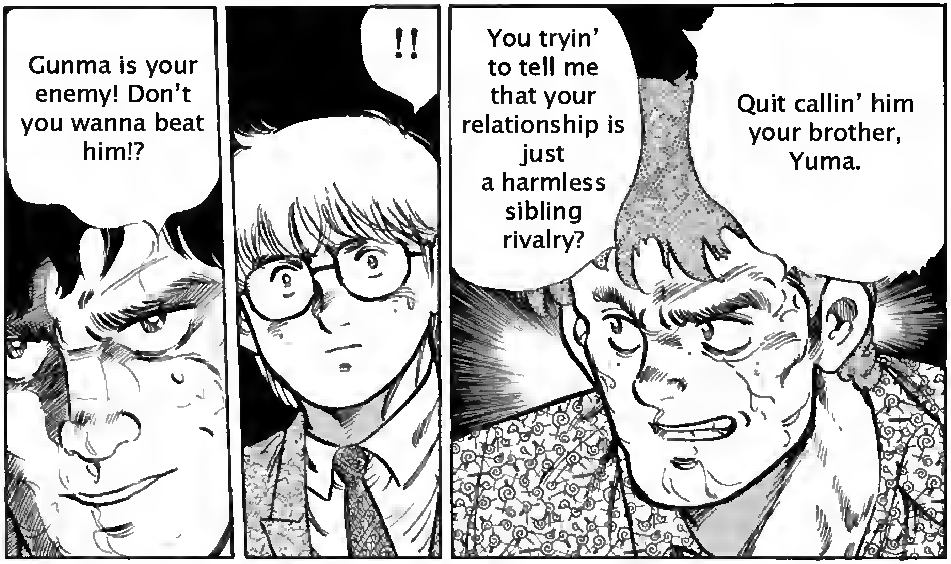
Just a little push.
All he needs is someone to give him a little push.

What, now you're brothers again all of a sudden?
He...
That's why my brother...
What is wrong with you?


Have you heard? He's been hallucinating. He sees Death, apparently.
GRRRR
He doesn't want to acknowledge his sins, and because of it, he sees phantoms.
He doesn't have the courage to face his own sins.

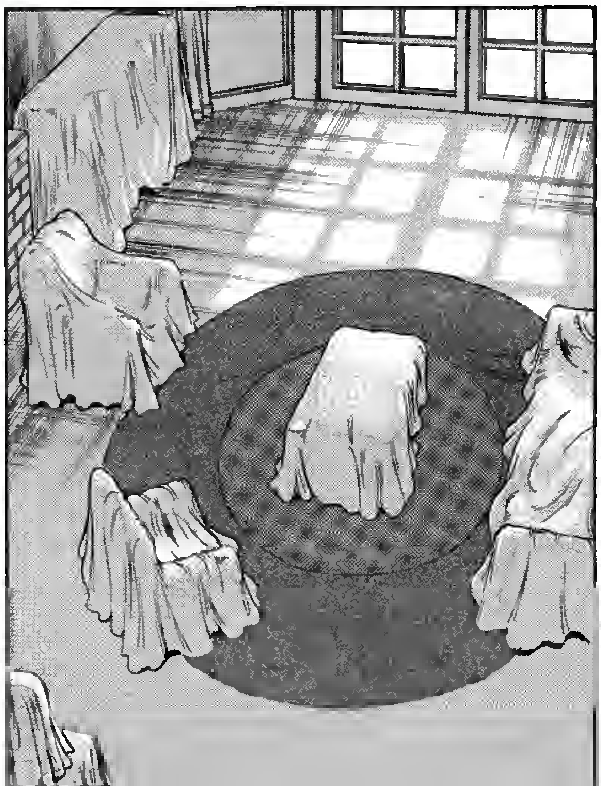
He has to face his own sins for what they are. Only then will he realize that he himself is the phantom of Death he's seeing...
What a coward.
What will it take for him to realize he's not a good man?
...like I have!
HEH HEH
...he's running away from his own crimes.
By trying to overtake the phantom ...

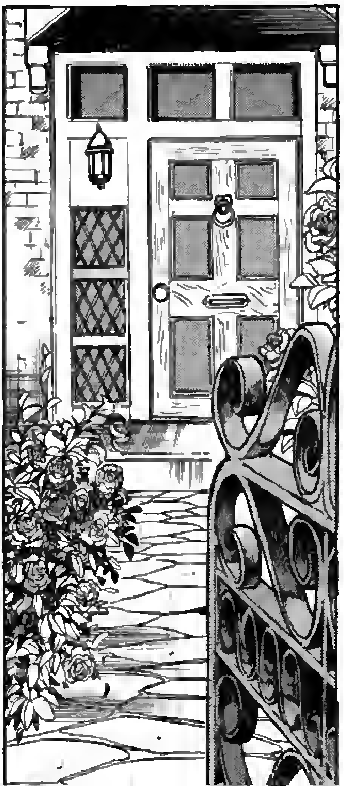

Otoya! What are you planning to do to my brother...?
Just sit back and watch. If he's too much of a coward, I'll give him the little push that he needs. Heh heh...

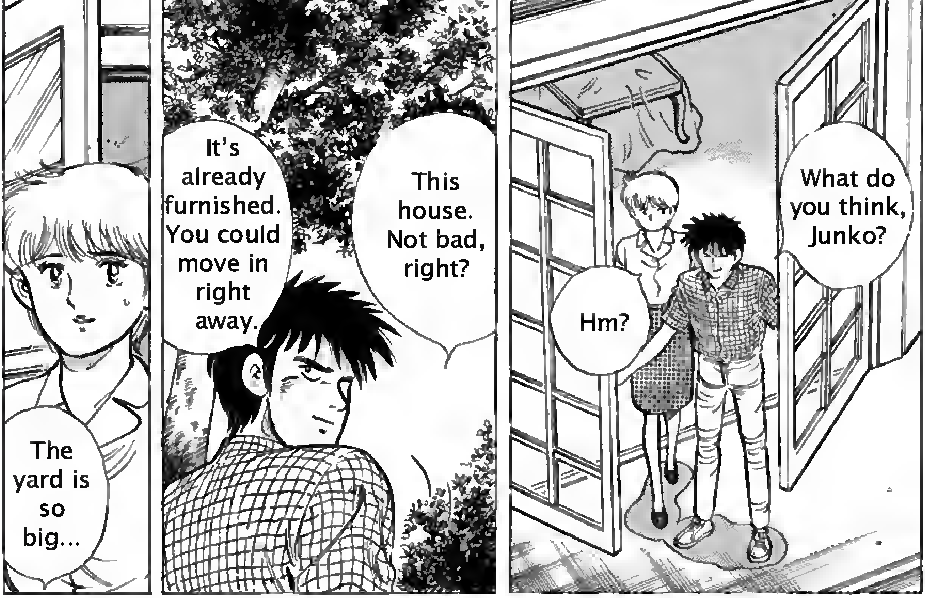

Gunma is your enemy! Don't you wanna beat him!?
!!
You tryin' to tell me that your relationship is just a harmless sibling rivalry?
Quit callin' him your brother, Yuma.

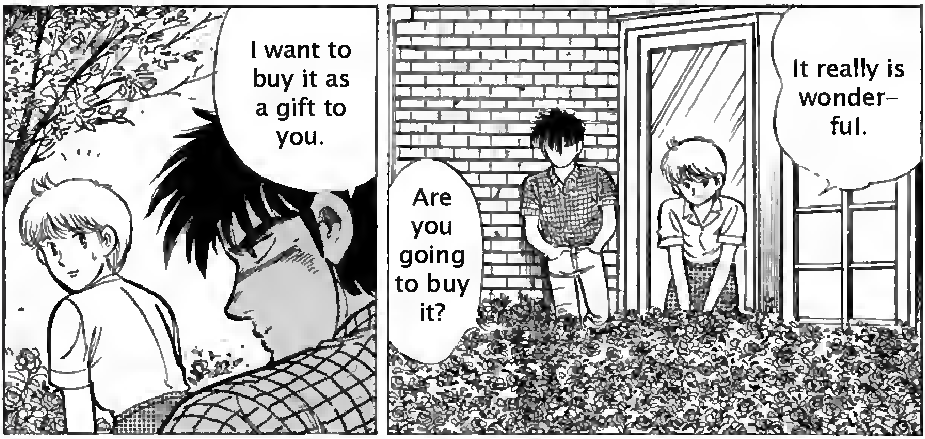
Ain't it time you start putting your life on the line, too!?
Take a look at my face, burnt to a crisp... Doesn't it look like Death to you?
...

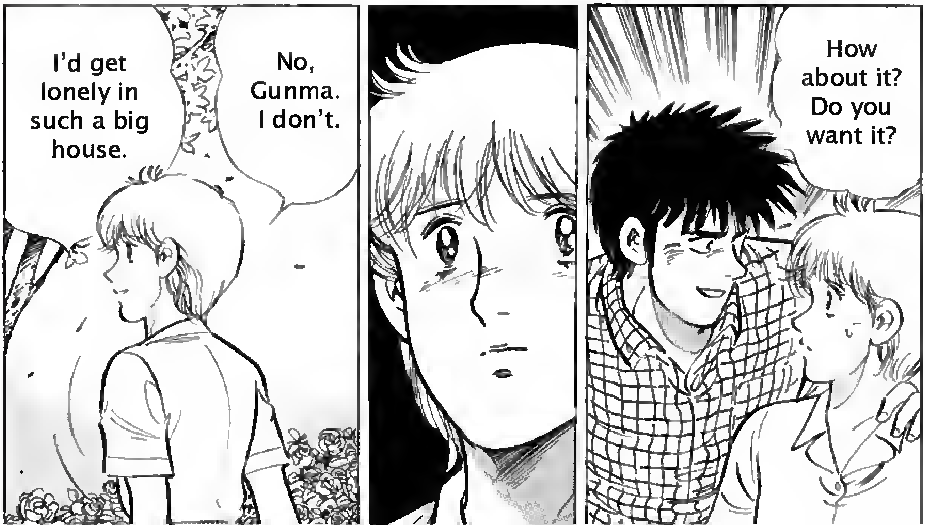
Hmph!
...
If he's your enemy, then hate him from the bottom of your heart!
I don't know if it has something to do with your heart problems, but your phony attitude makes me wanna puke!
...
But wanting to beat someone and hating them...
...are two different things.
Sorry, Otoya.
I'll change my half-assed attitude.
...I'll be the one left standing!
When all the cheap imitations are out of my way...
キィィーン
VEEEEEEEN

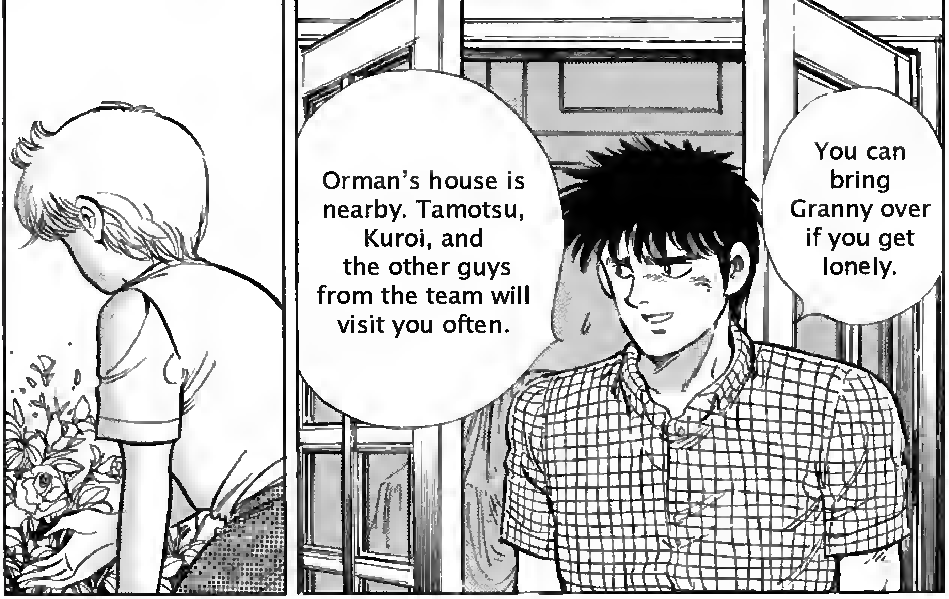




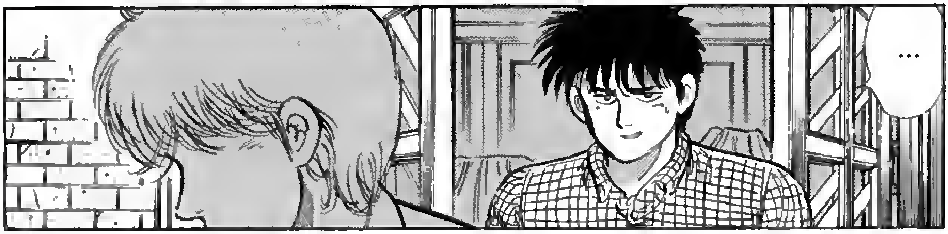

The yard is so big...
It's already furnished. You could move in right away.
This house. Not bad, right?
Hm?
What do you think, Junko?


I want to buy it as a gift to you.
Are you going to buy it?
It really is wonder-ful.


I'd get lonely in such a big house.
No, Gunma. I don't.
How about it? Do you want it?


Orman's house is nearby. Tamotsu, Kuroi, and the other guys from the team will visit you often.
You can bring Granny over if you get lonely.

Sure I will.
...
Will you come visit me?
What about you?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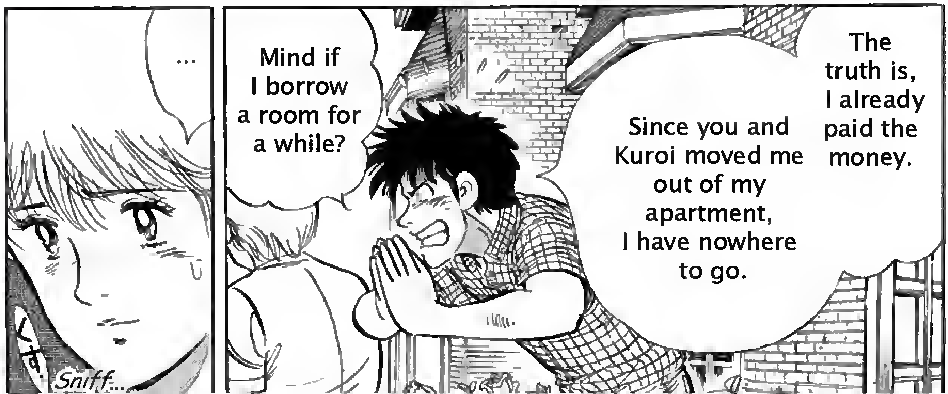
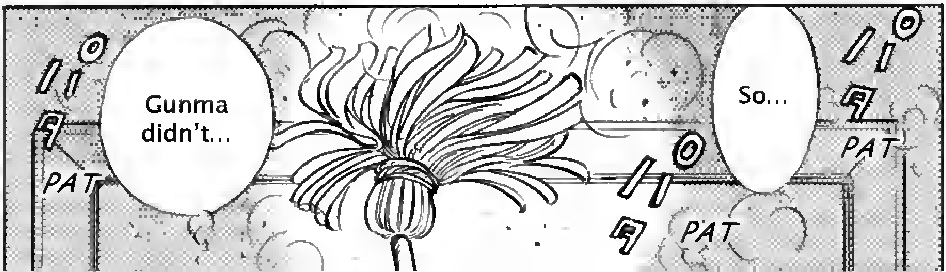
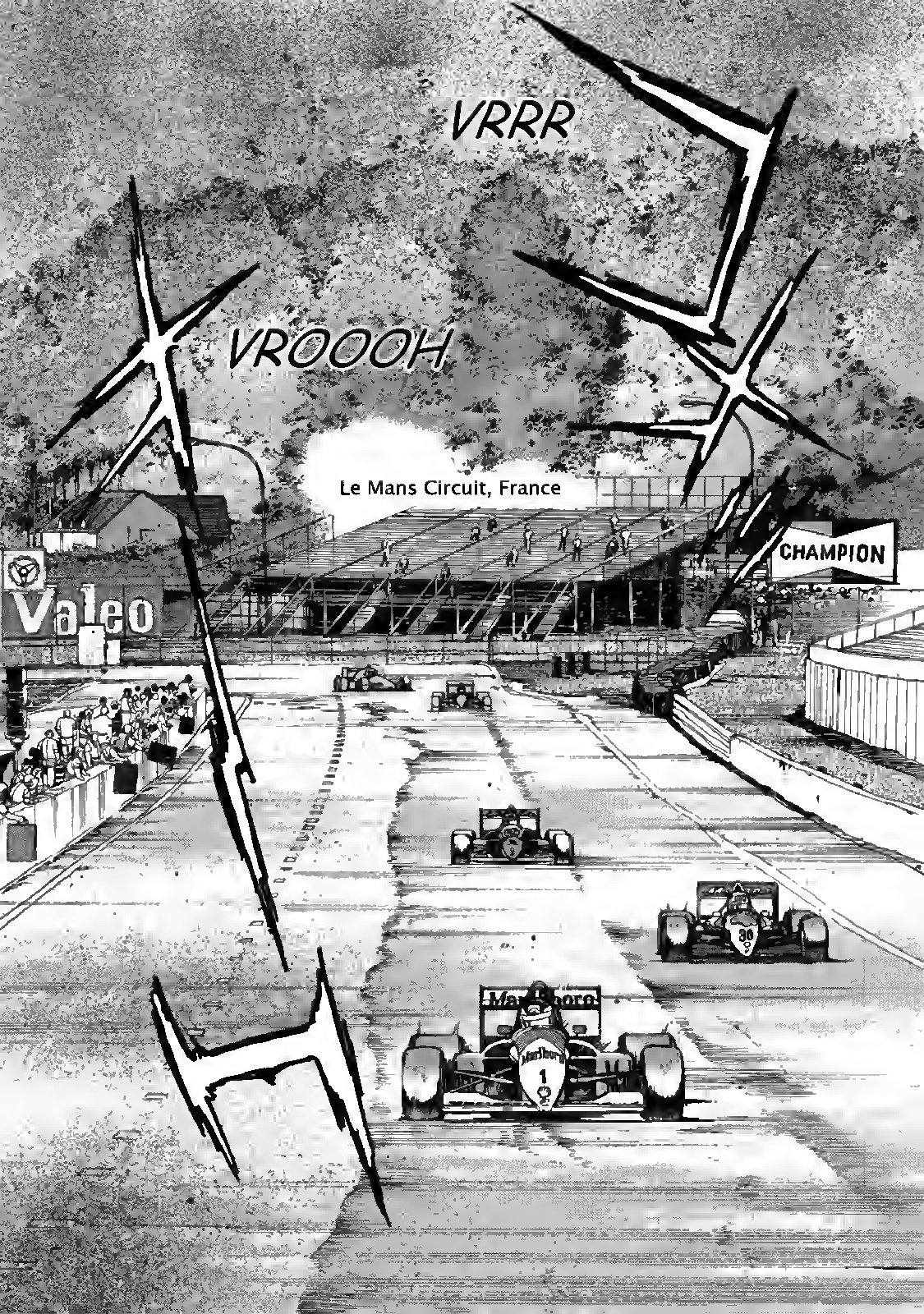
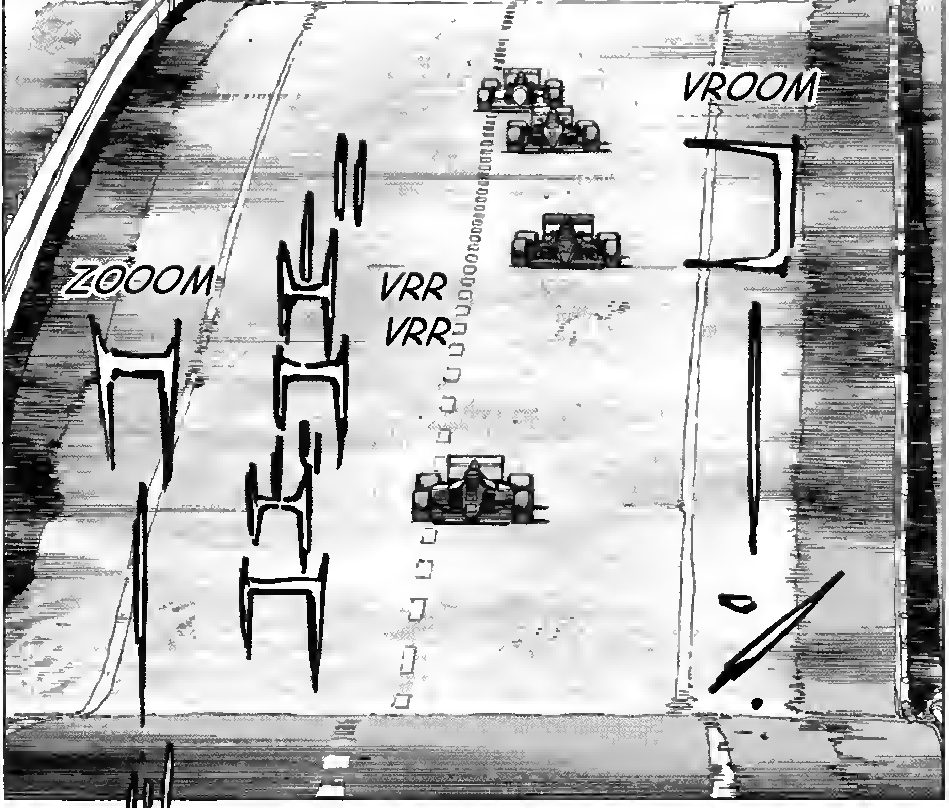

...
Sniff...
Mind if I borrow a room for a while?
Since you and Kuroi moved me out of my apartment, I have nowhere to go.
The truth is, I already paid the money.

...
Yeah, I guess ...
So we're going to live together?

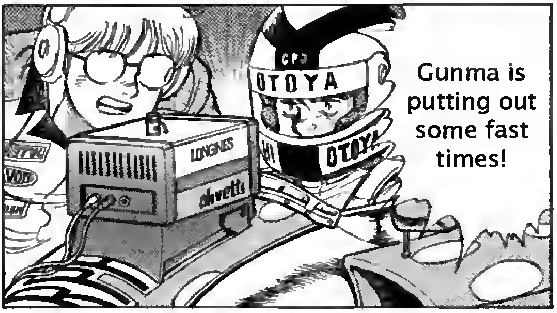

Gunma didn't...
PAT
So...
PAT
PAT

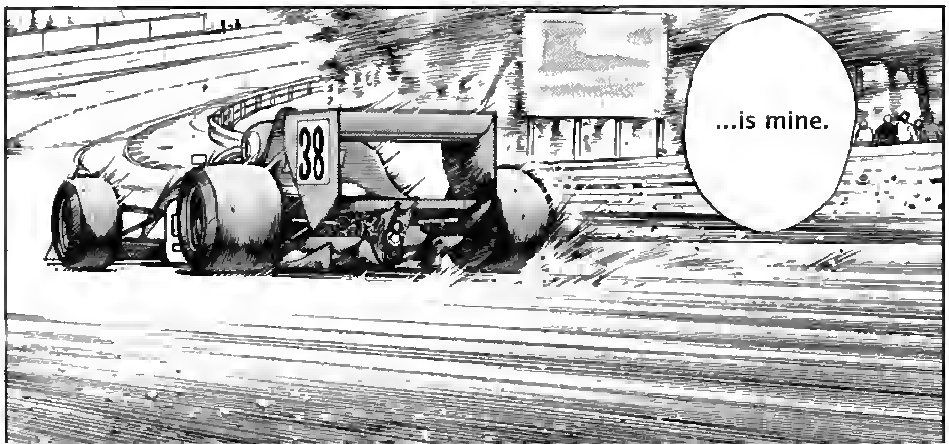
...
...say anything about marrying you, did he?
But still...
...
PAT
PAT
PAT
...it's a step in the right direction!
PAT
SQUEEK
...a black shadow.

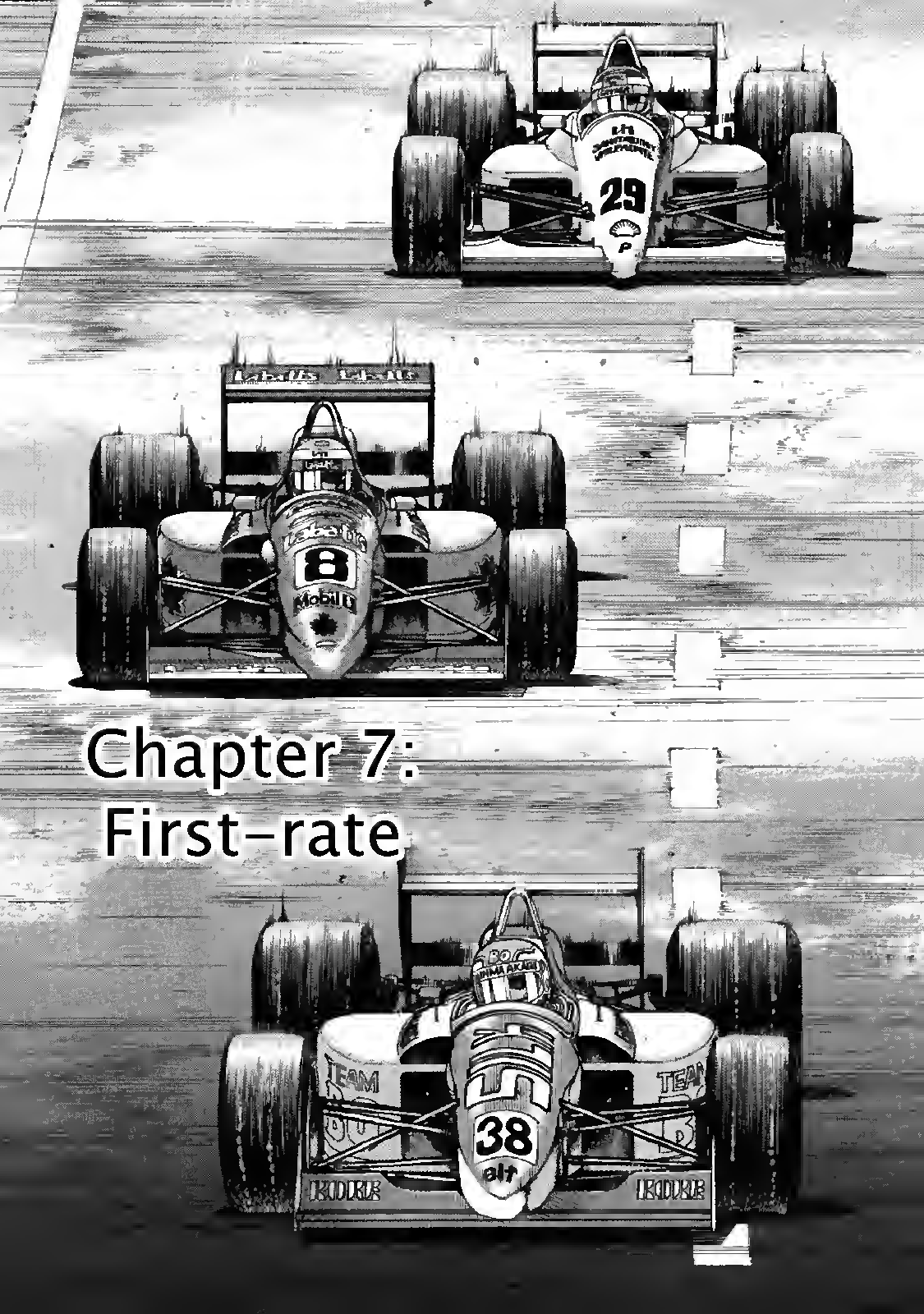

VRRR
VROOOH
Le Mans Circuit, France
Valeo
CHAMPION
Marlboro
Marlboro
1
2
30
9


VROOM
ZOOOM
VRR
VRR

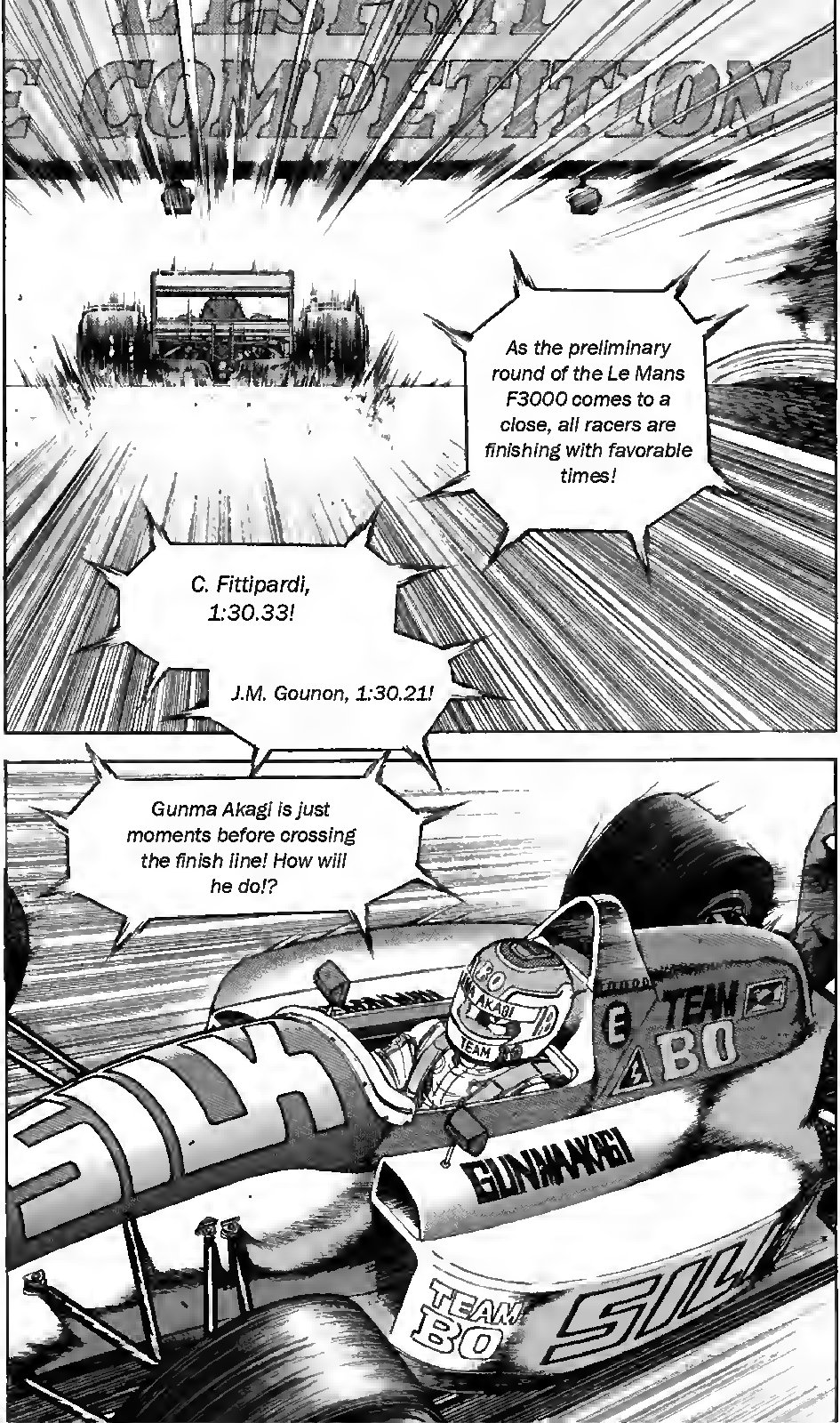
Ven-
geance
...
OTOYA


OTOYA
LONGINES
olivetti
Gunma is putting out some fast times!

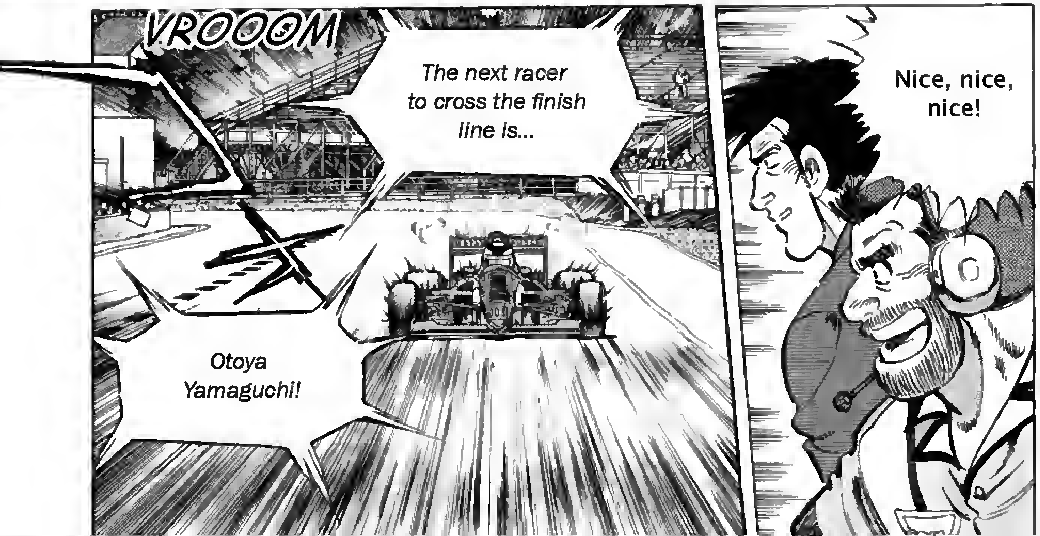

38
...is mine.

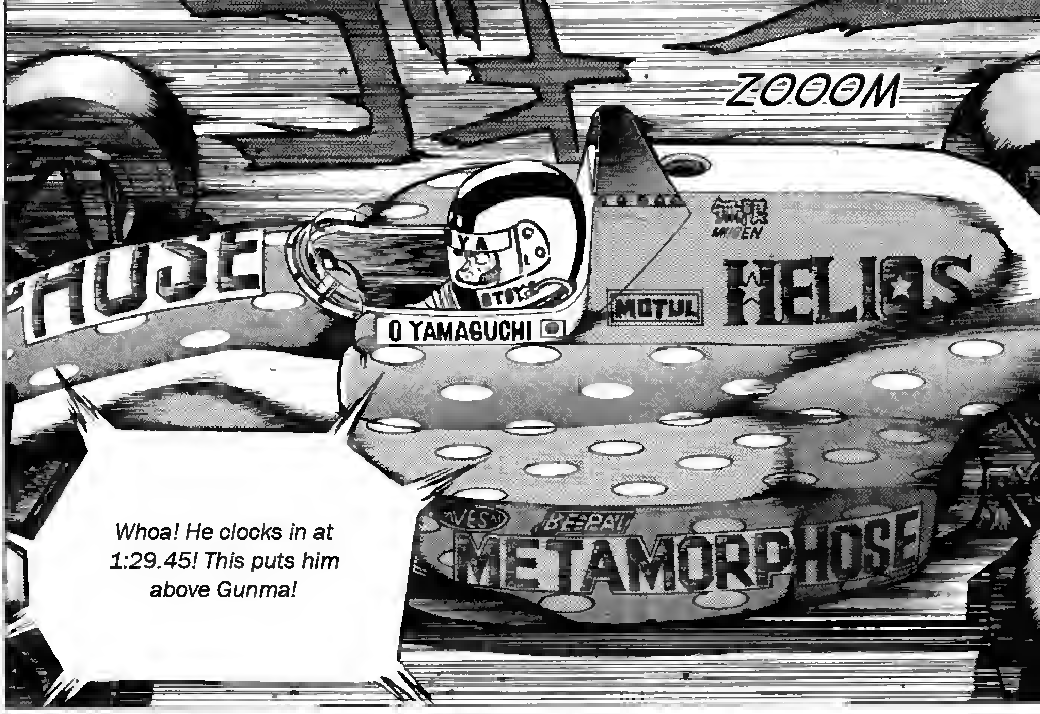


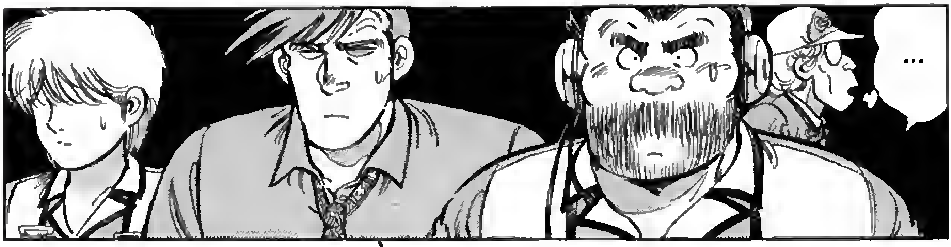
Chapter 7: First-rate

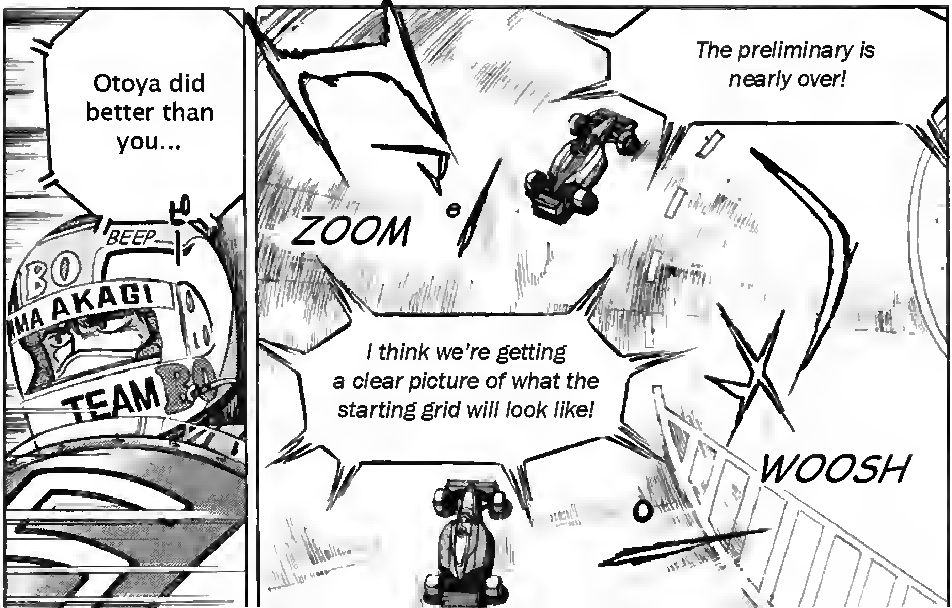

COMPETITION
As the preliminary round of the Le Mans F3000 comes to a close, all racers are finishing with favorable times!
C. Fittipardi, 1:30.33!
J.M. Gounon, 1:30.21!
Gunma Akagi is just moments before crossing the finish line! How will he do!?
TEAM BO
GUNMA AKAGI
TEAM BO
SILK

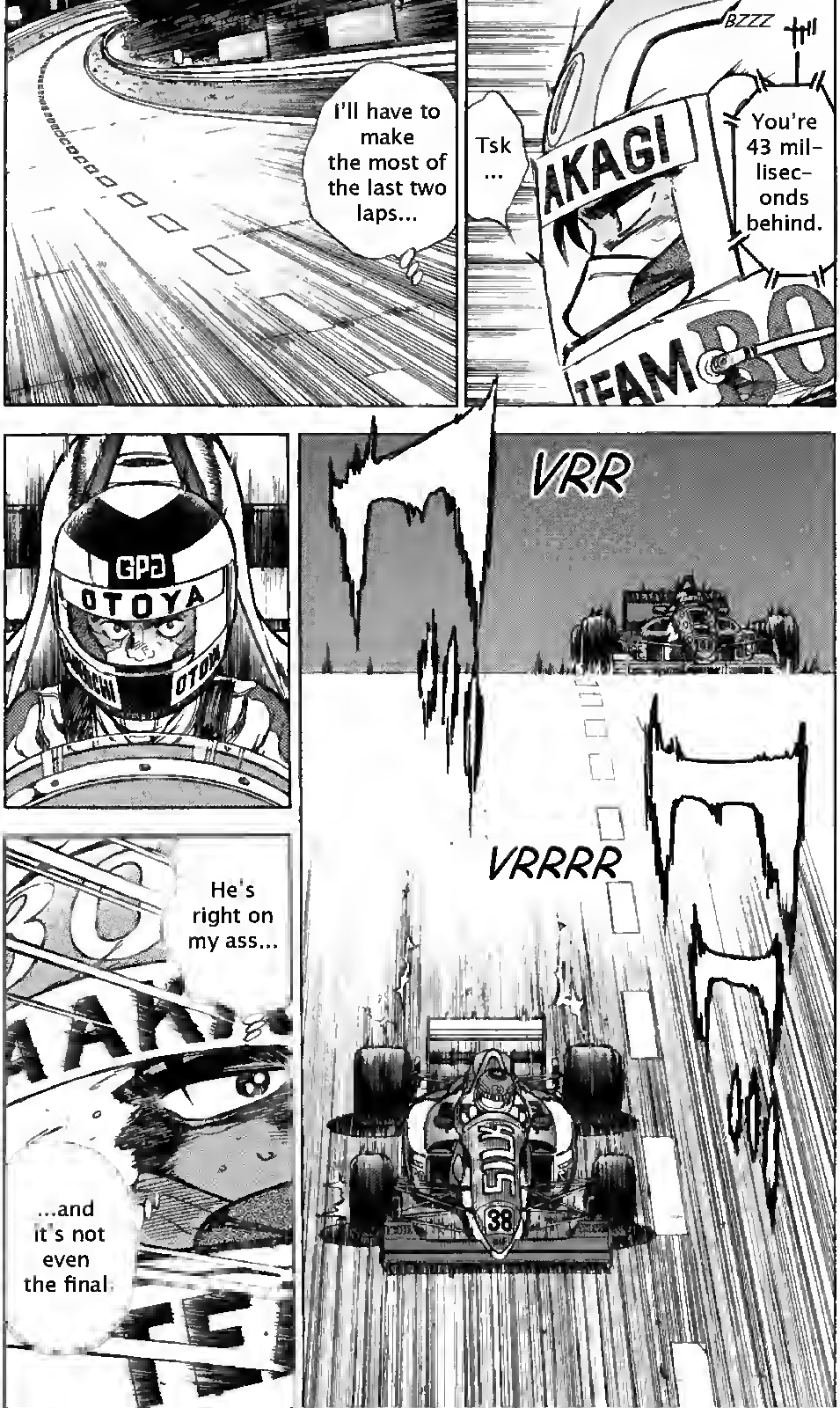
...and here he comes! 1:29.88!
ZOOMS
DAMS
RACING
GJ MOTOR SPORTS
38
Gunma Akagi is the only driver so far to finish under 1:30! Has he secured pole position!?
WOOSH

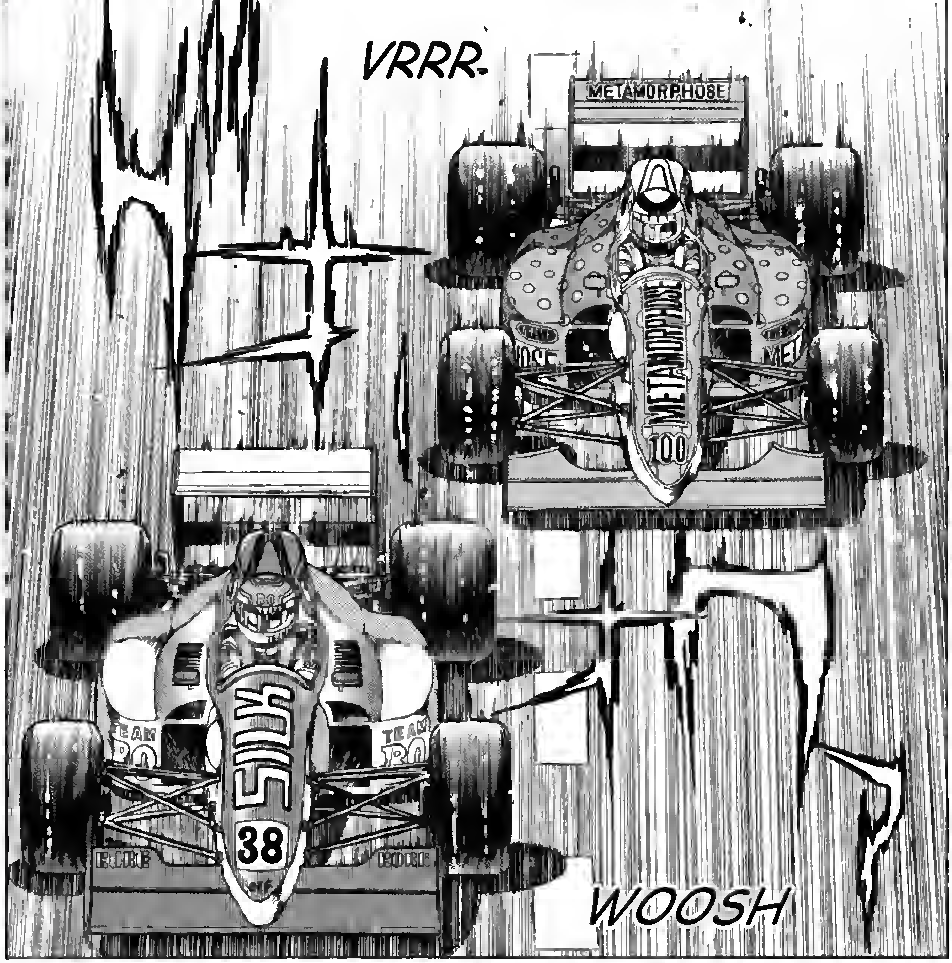

VROOOM
The next racer to cross the finish line is...
Otoya Yamaguchi!
Nice, nice, nice!


ZOOOM
HUSE
MOTUL
HELIAS
METAMORPHOSE
Whoa! He clocks in at 1:29.45! This puts him above Gunma!


...

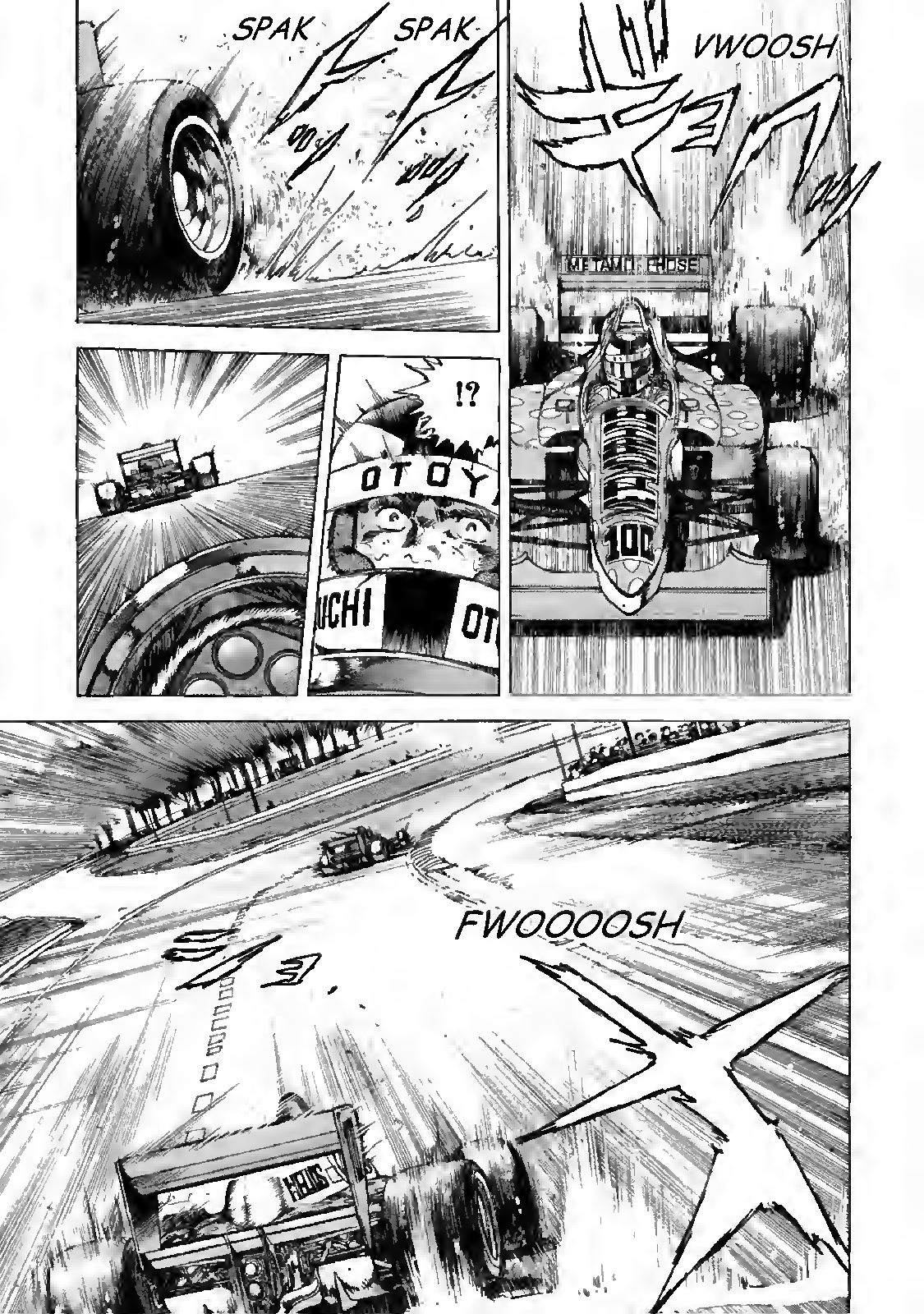

Otoya did better than you...
BEEP
AKAGI
TEAM
The preliminary is nearly over!
ZOOM
I think we're getting a clear picture of what the starting grid will look like!
WOOSH


I'll have to make the most of the last two laps...
Tsk ...
BZZZ
AKAGI
You're 43 milliseconds behind.
TEAM
GP2
OTOYA
VRR
VRRRR
38
He's right on my ass...
...and it's not even the final.


VRRR-
METAMORPHOSE
METAMORPHOSE
100
SILK
38
TEAM
WOOSH

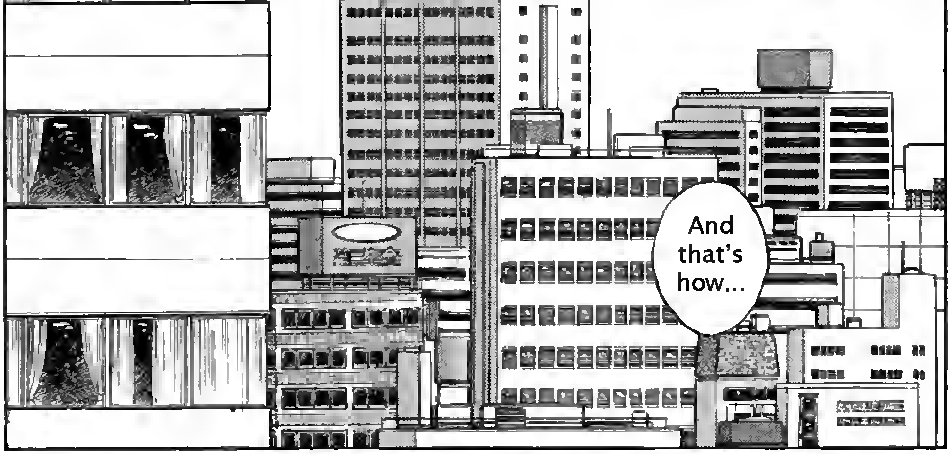
Pole position is pretty much yours already!
Don't push it, Otoya!

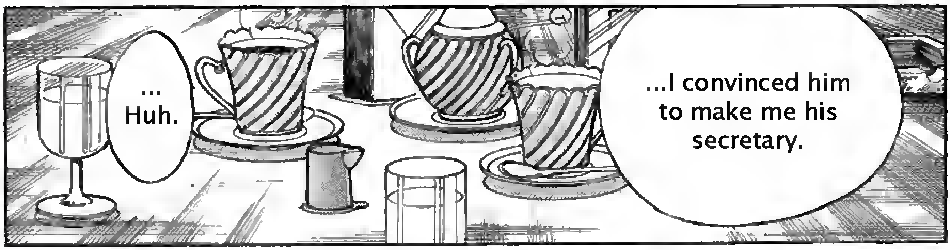
Dammit! Too much thrust!

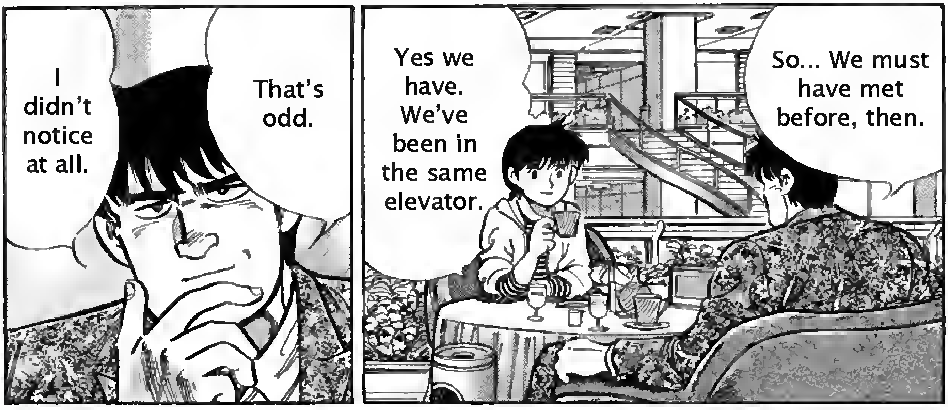

SPAK
SPAK
VWOOSH
METAMI HOSE
100
!?
OTOY
ICHI
OT
FWOOOOSH

What!?
He wasn't ...
Will Gunma Akagi make good time!?
Here he co-mes!
ZOOOM
1'28"00
He didn't hit his brakes...
He made the 28-second mark!
All right!

ZOOOM
How could...?
No way...
METAMORPHOSE
ENKEI
This is the second preliminary of the Le Mans F3000. Gunma crossed the flag at an astonishing 28 seconds right in the nick of time!
He takes pole position right at the last moment of this preliminary!
ZOOOM
This man's as fast as a bullet! What incredible speed!
VRRR
...Otoya
I'm sure it just looked that way...
ZOOOOOOM

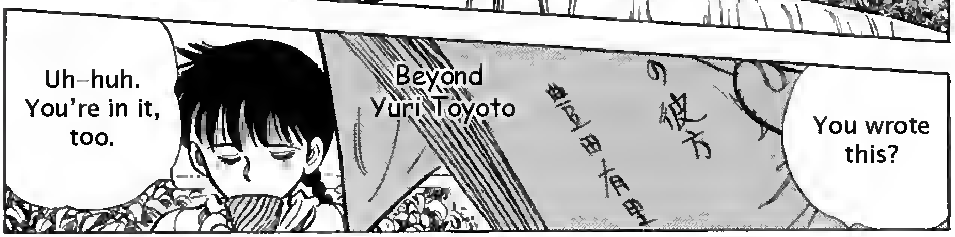

And that's how...


...
Huh.
...I convinced him to make me his secretary.

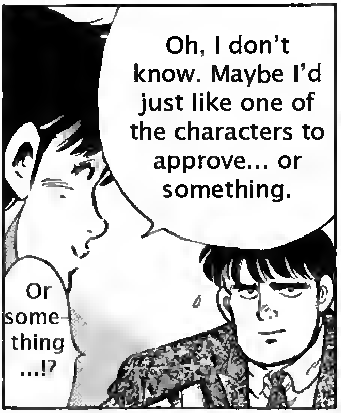

I didn't notice at all.
That's odd.
Yes we have. We've been in the same elevator.
So... We must have met before, then.

I appreciate the offer, but I'd like you to read this.
Hey... What do you say we go out somewhere to eat?
You were under a lot of stress at the time with all the disasters Akagi Group was going through, I imagine.

What's this...?
A story of camaraderie... Of your father and Mr. Kasai!


You wrote this?
Beyond
Yuri Toyoto
Uh-huh. You're in it, too.

I'm not quite finished with it, though.
Not until I find out where they are.


Oh, I don't know. Maybe I'd just like one of the characters to approve... or something.
Or some-thing ...!?

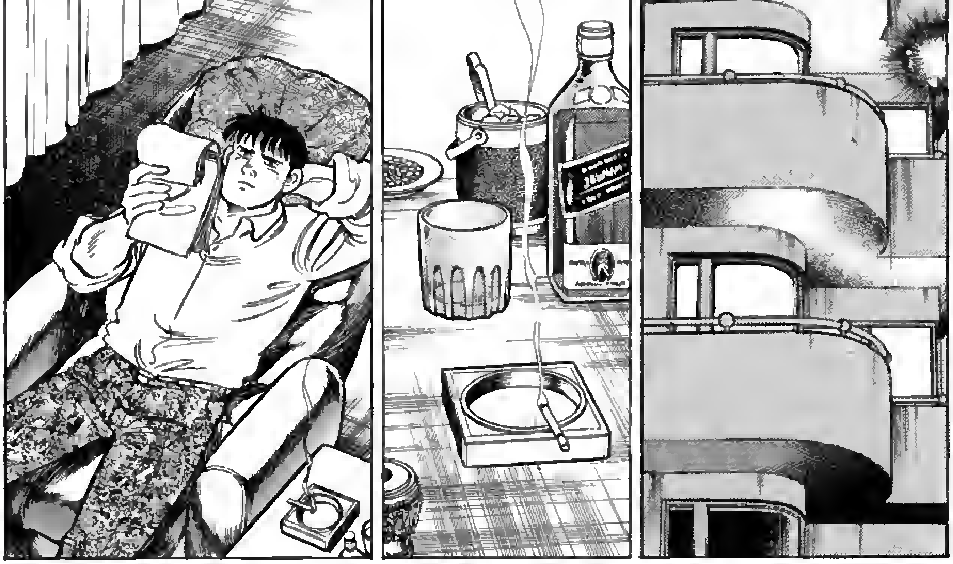
Why do you want me to read this?

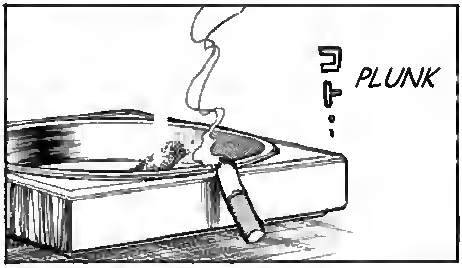
I have to be some-where...
...that might hold the key to your father's where-abouts.

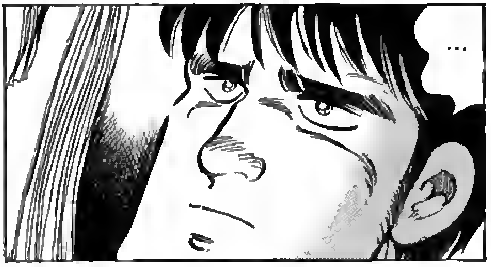
What about dinner?

Well, I'm off then.

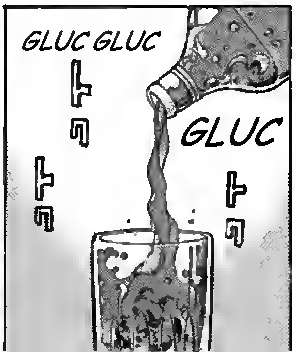
Oh, and also...
I'll let you know if I find out.
...
...like... a really horrible person. Hope you won't get mad!
In my story, I made your character ...




コト…
PLUNK


…

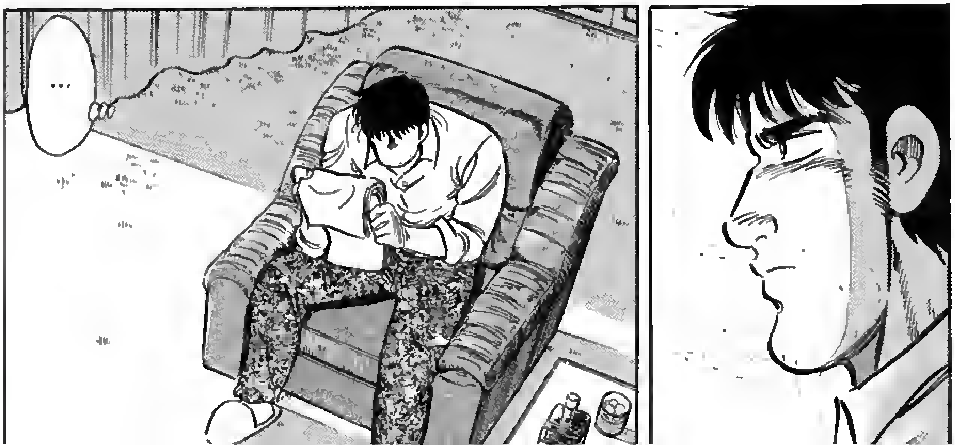
SHAF
シャボ


GLUC GLUC
トクトク
GLUC
トク

FLIP
The hell is that, anyway?
Hmph. A first-rate life...
RRRRR
!
RRRRR...
FWISH

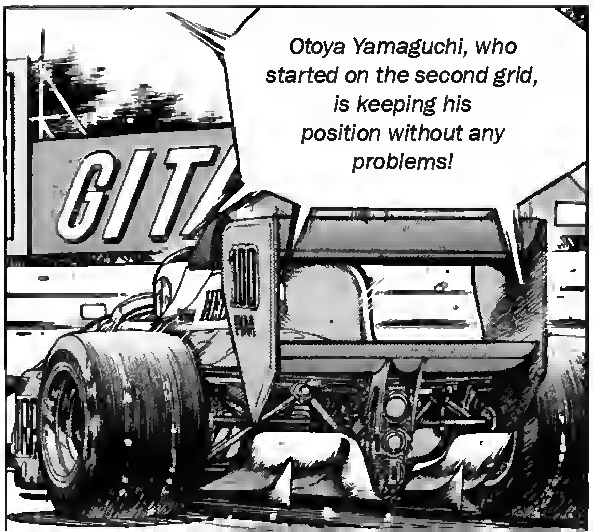
Oh, excuse me.
What?
Yuri? I just finished reading it. You really tried to emphasize this "first-rate life" idea, huh?
I thought you were someone else.

...
Yes, I'm sorry.
I'm not feeling very well today.
Please start the board meeting without me.


...

EST
Starting in pole position is Gunma Akagi, who clocked some incredible times at yesterday's preliminary!
Now, in the final race, he's maintained a big lead over the rest!
38

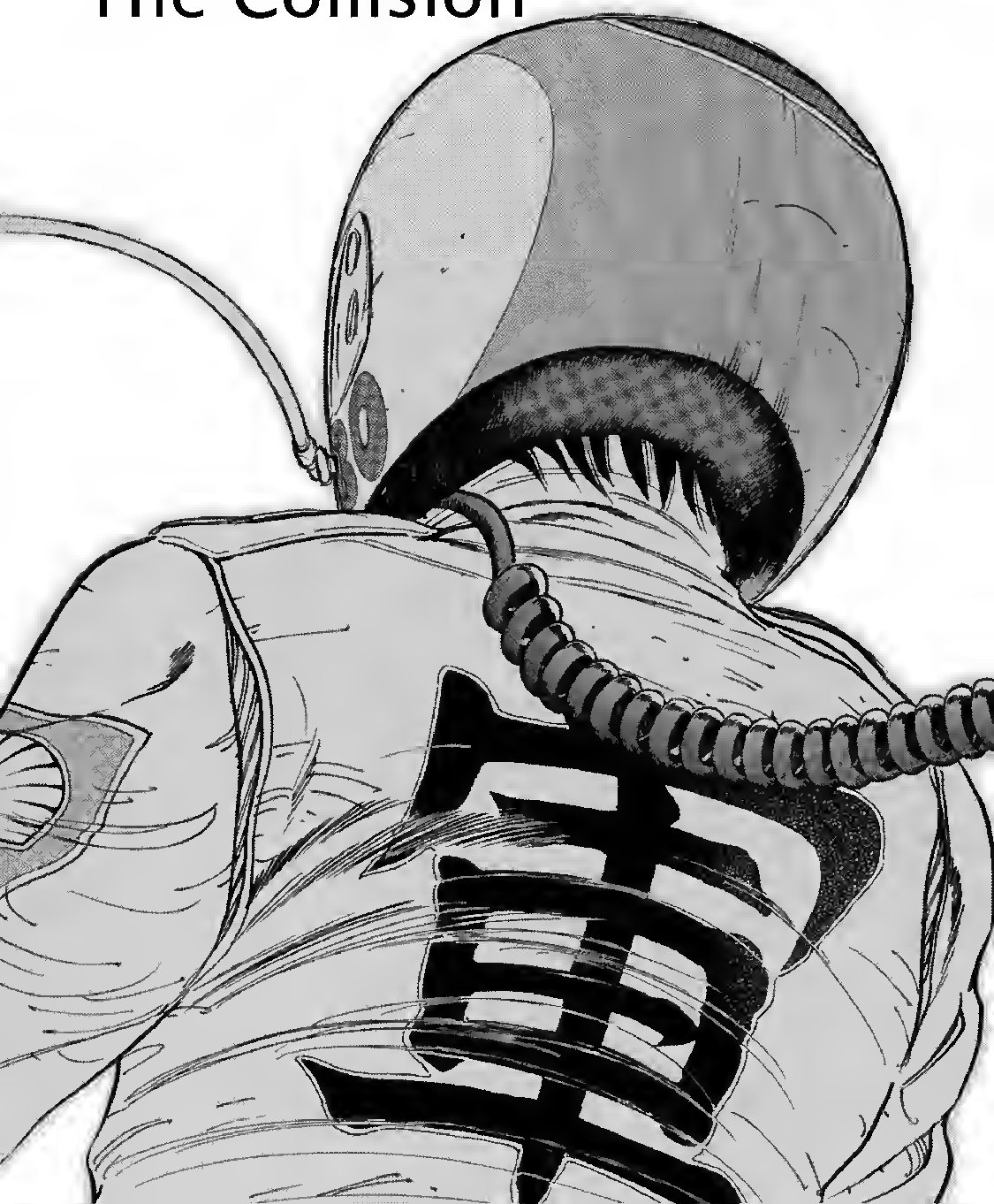
Looks like we have a Japanese invasion...
...of the European F3000!


Otoya Yamaguchi, who started on the second grid, is keeping his position without any problems!

ITANES
Nice, Gunma. Keep it up.
BEEP
Otoya's in second. You have a 1.5 second lead over him.
BZZZ
AKAGI
TEAM
GUNMA AKAGI
He's in a tangle with Gounon. It's slowing him down.
BZZZZZ BZ
AKAGI
Just try and solidify that gap and race ahead.
BEEP
Mur- derer ...
BZZ
M...
BLEEP
GUNMA AKAGI
!?
You're a murderer, Gunma...
BEEP

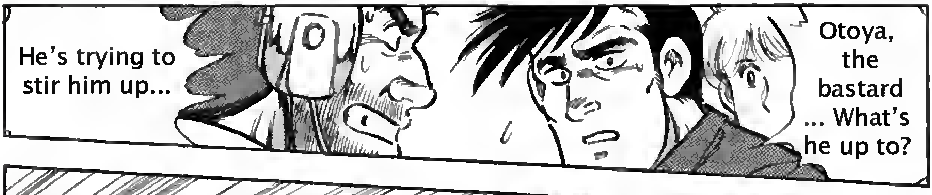
BZZZ
You wanted to kill Peabow from the start.
Is... Is that Otoya talking!?
GRIN
He's interfering with the intercom!
Hey... Whoa...

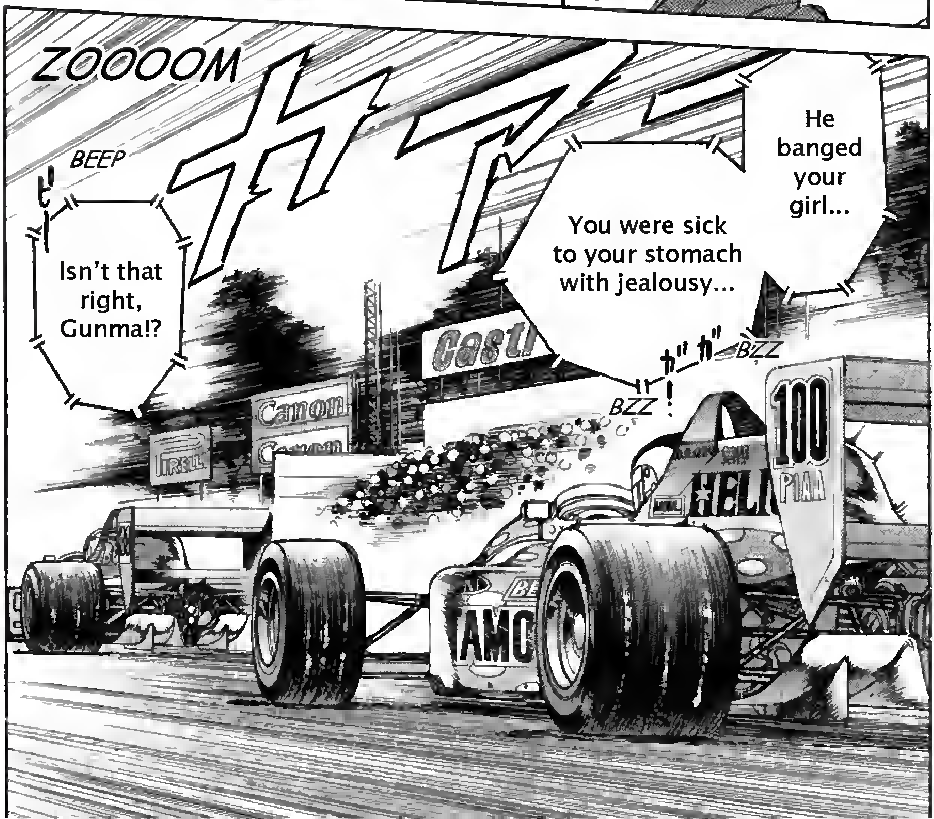
Chapter 8:
The Collision



BEEP
Mur–derer ...
You're a mur–derer...
BEEP
...aren't you?
BZZZ
It was your plan to kill Peabow...
You wanted to kill Peabow right from the start!
Murderer
31
100
80
elf
KORE

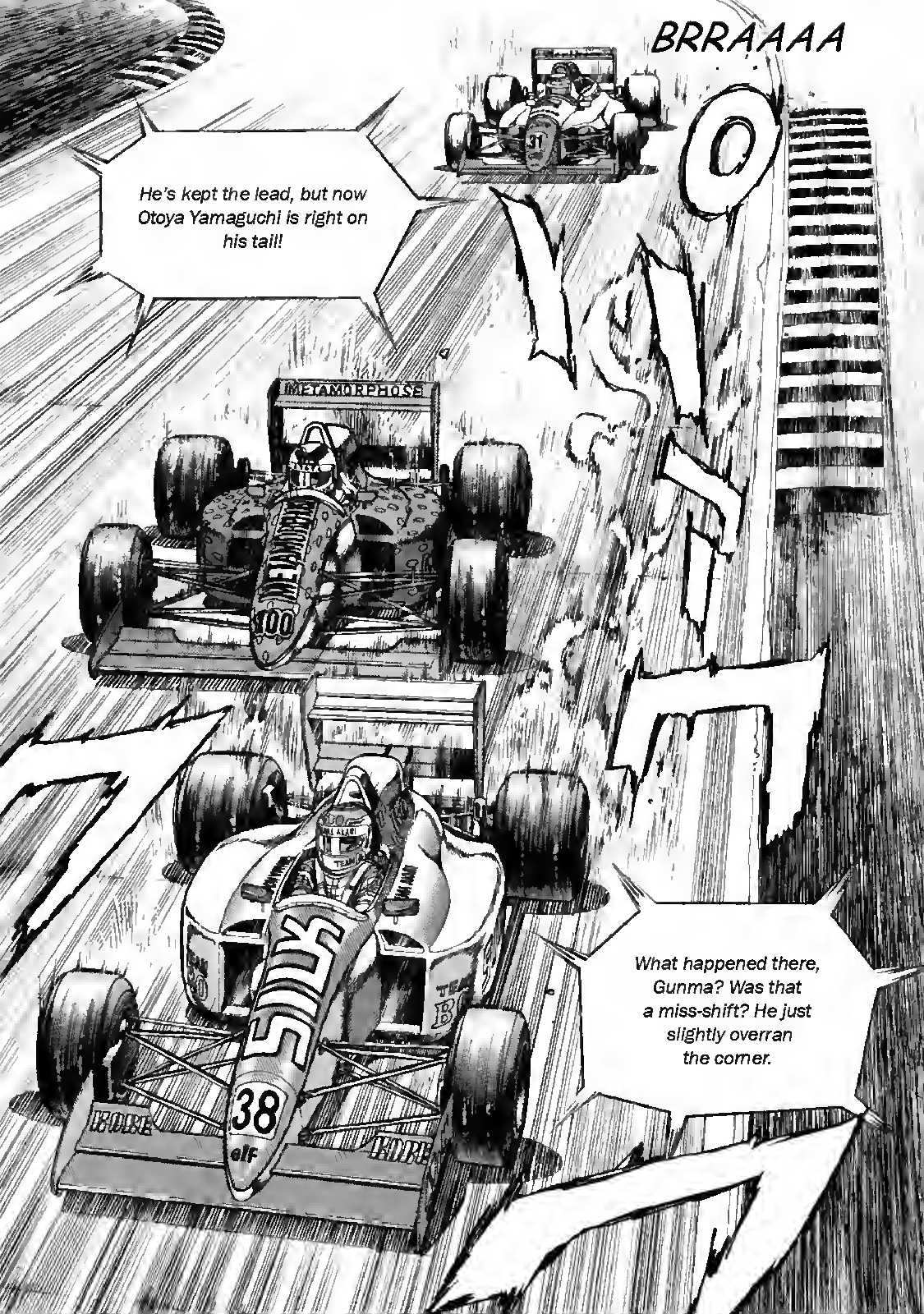
He's interfering with our intercom!
Gunma, switch off your intercom!
You wanted to kill Peabow...
Otoya! You son of a bitch!
AKAGI
TEAM

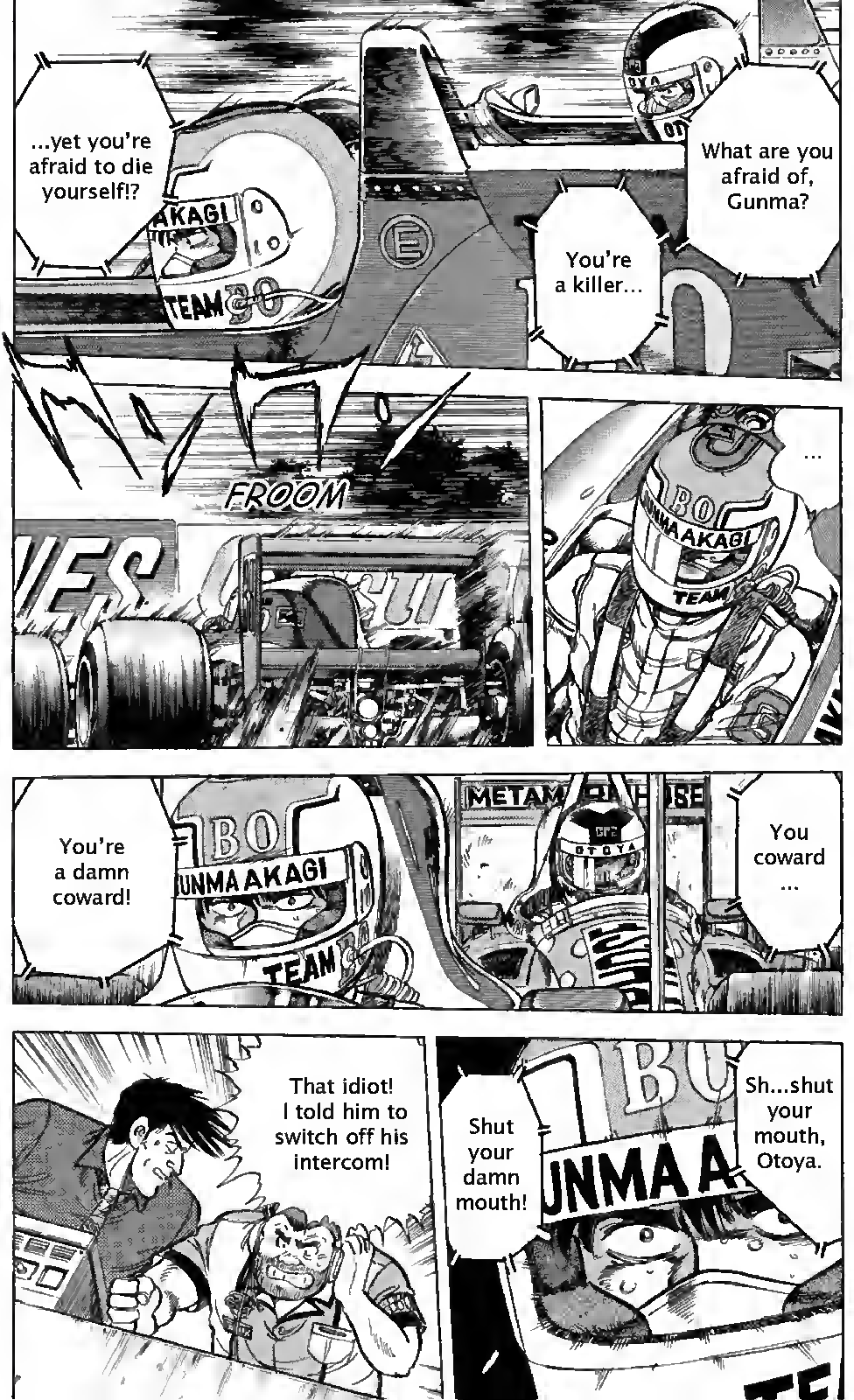

He's trying to stir him up...
Otoya, the bastard ... What's he up to?


ZOOOOM
BEEP
Isn't that right, Gunma!?
You were sick to your stomach with jealousy...
He banged your girl...
BZZ
BZZ!
100

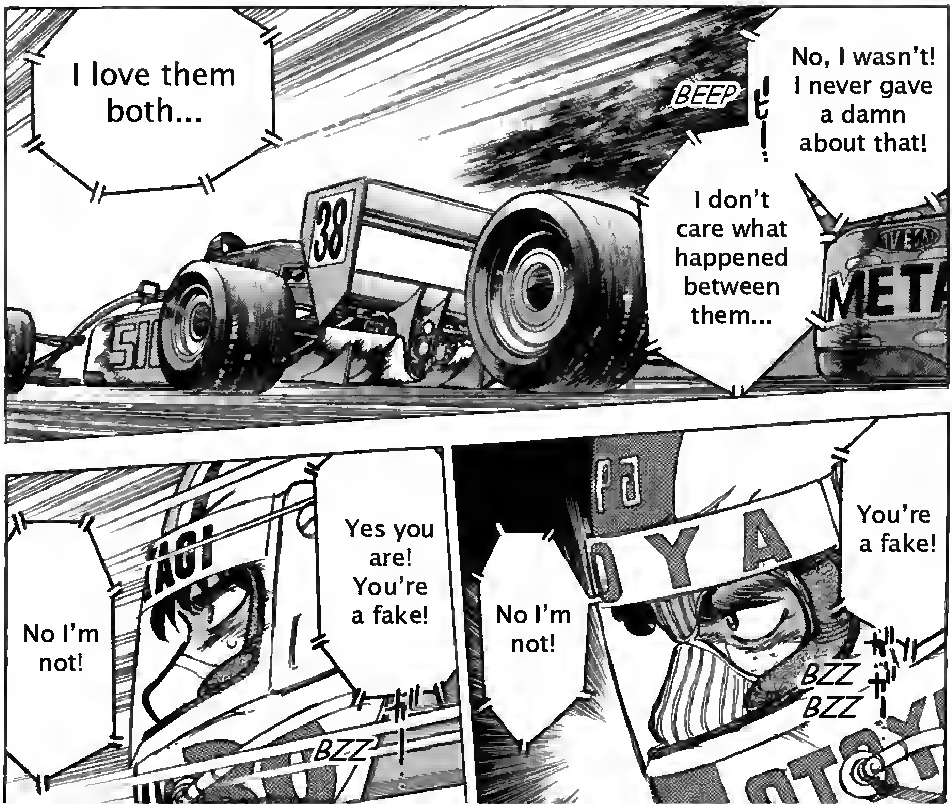
BZZZ
GUNMAAKAGI
TEAM
You see your friend, the black shadow?
Look in front of you, Gunma.
Gunma, switch off your intercom!
Otoya's just spitting out a load of crap!
...that you killed!
That's the ghost of all the people...
BZZZ
A ghost...!?

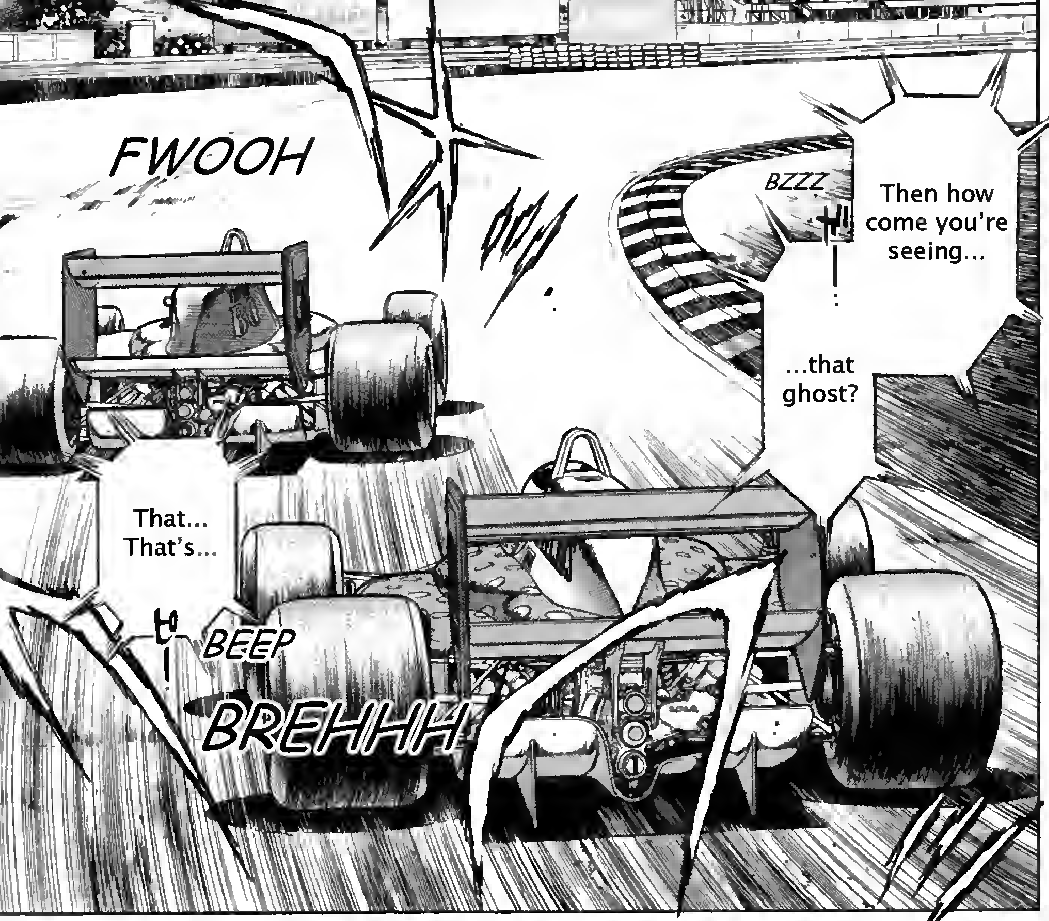
VRRRRR
... ghost ...
AKAGI
TEAM
A...
Whoa!
VRRVRR
WOOSH
Heh heh...
He's all shook up...

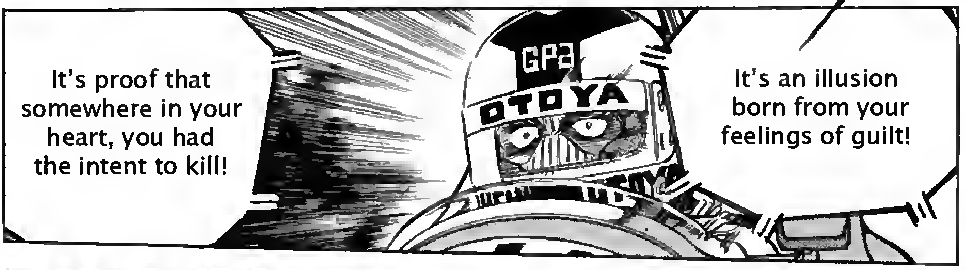

BRRAAAA
He's kept the lead, but now Otoya Yamaguchi is right on his tail!
METAMORPHOSE
100
31
SILK
38
elf
What happened there, Gunma? Was that a miss-shift? He just slightly overran the corner.


What are you afraid of, Gunma?
You're a killer...
...yet you're afraid to die yourself!?
FROOM
...
You coward ...
You're a damn coward!
That idiot! I told him to switch off his intercom!
Shut your damn mouth!
Sh...shut your mouth, Otoya.

BZZ
You filthy liar! You wanted revenge 'cause he screwed your little Junko!
That's the truth!
You were enraged by that, weren't you!?
BEEP
I just wanted him to race... That's all...
I had no intention to kill Peabow...
You're lying!

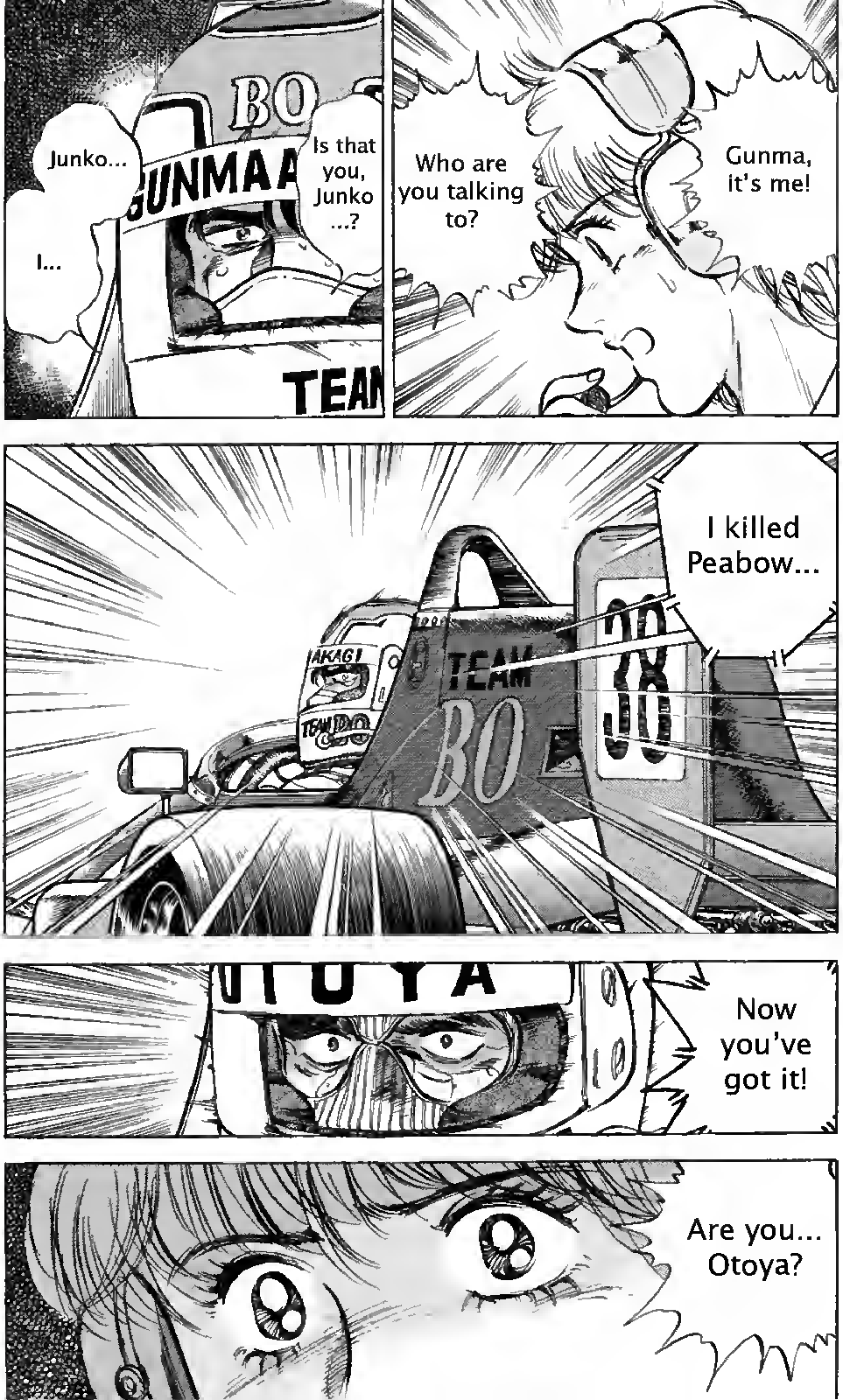

I love them both...
BEEP
No, I wasn't! I never gave a damn about that!
I don't care what happened between them...
Yes you are! You're a fake!
No I'm not!
BZZ
No I'm not!
You're a fake!
BZZ
BZZ


FWOOH
BZZZ
Then how come you're seeing...
...that ghost?
That... That's...
BEEP
BREHHH


It's proof that somewhere in your heart, you had the intent to kill!
GP2
OTOYA
It's an illusion born from your feelings of guilt!

I can't take this anymore!
GRIP
Cut it out, Otoya!
NMA AKA
C... cut that out...

You talk to him!
What's going on...?
I'm gonna go give his crew a piece of my mind!
Kuroi! Talk to Gunma. Try to take his attention away from Otoya!
Gun-ma...
...!
You gotta calm him down! Can you do it?
I'm not lying...
I still do.
I loved Peabow...
What are you saying!?
Gun-ma...
And you're still here, living life like nothing happened.
That's right. I'm still alive...
That's right... I killed Peabow...
But you killed him...

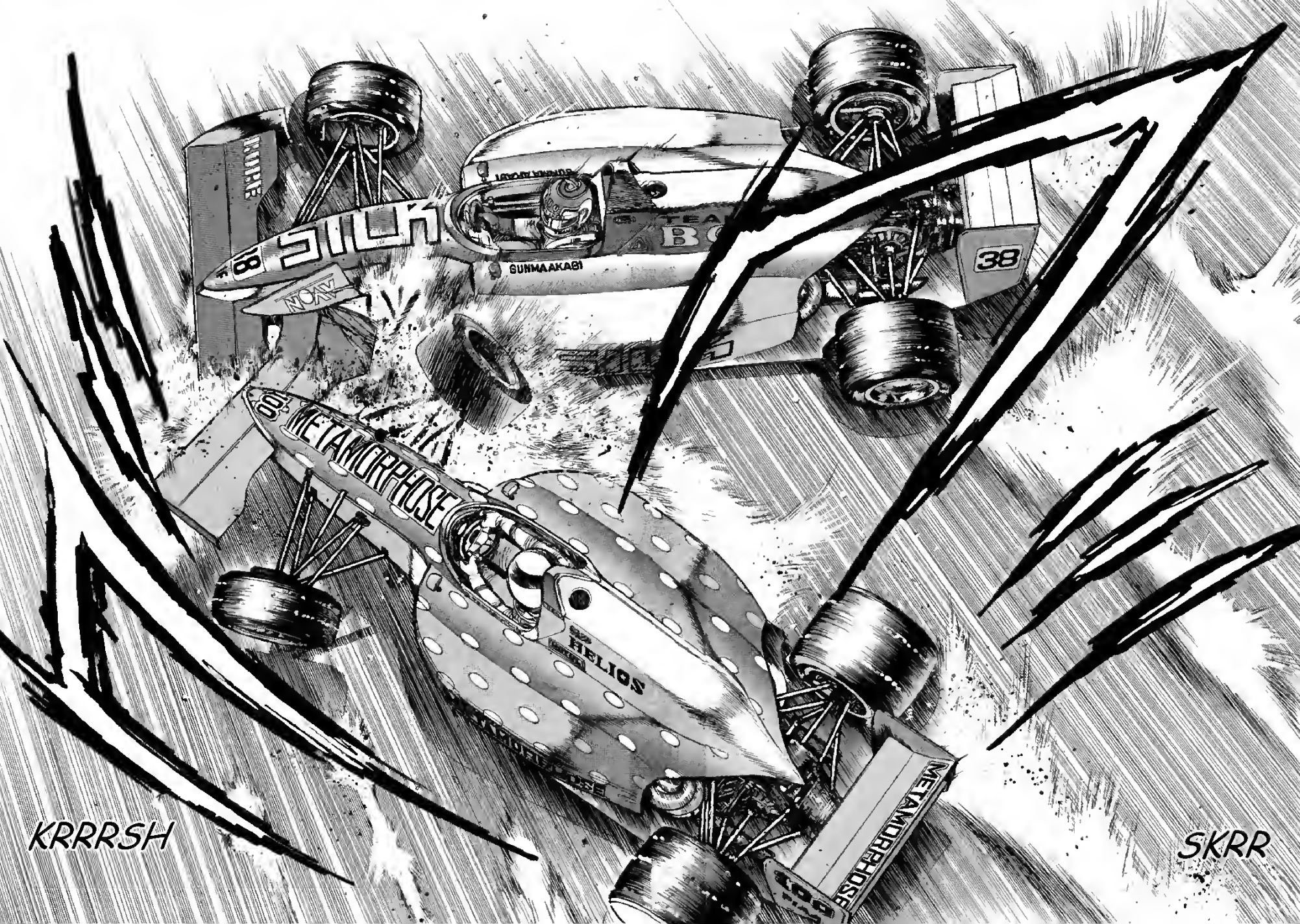

Junko...
I...
Is that you, Junko ...?
Who are you talking to?
Gunma, it's me!
I killed Peabow...
Now you've got it!
Are you... Otoya?

Whoa, hold on...
... interfering with ours on purpose!
Huh!?
You have your team's intercom ...
Hey, just what the hell are you bastards up to!?

Hey, what are you doing? Let go of me!
What are you tryin' to pull here!?
Whoa, calm down, Orman.

Is Otoya trying to pull something!?
What's wrong with your intercom? Ours has been down for a while now.

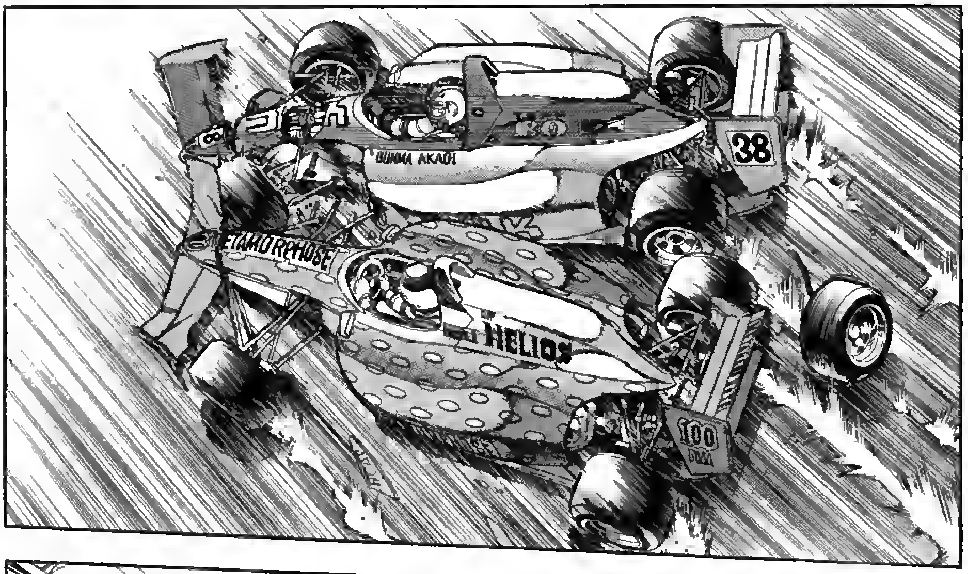
KREE
I...
TEAM
SILK
OTOYA
!?
Gunma!
G...
...
killed
...
GUNMA


KRRRSH
SKRR
SILK
GUNMA AKAGI
38
METAMORPHOSE
HELIOS
METAMORPHOSE

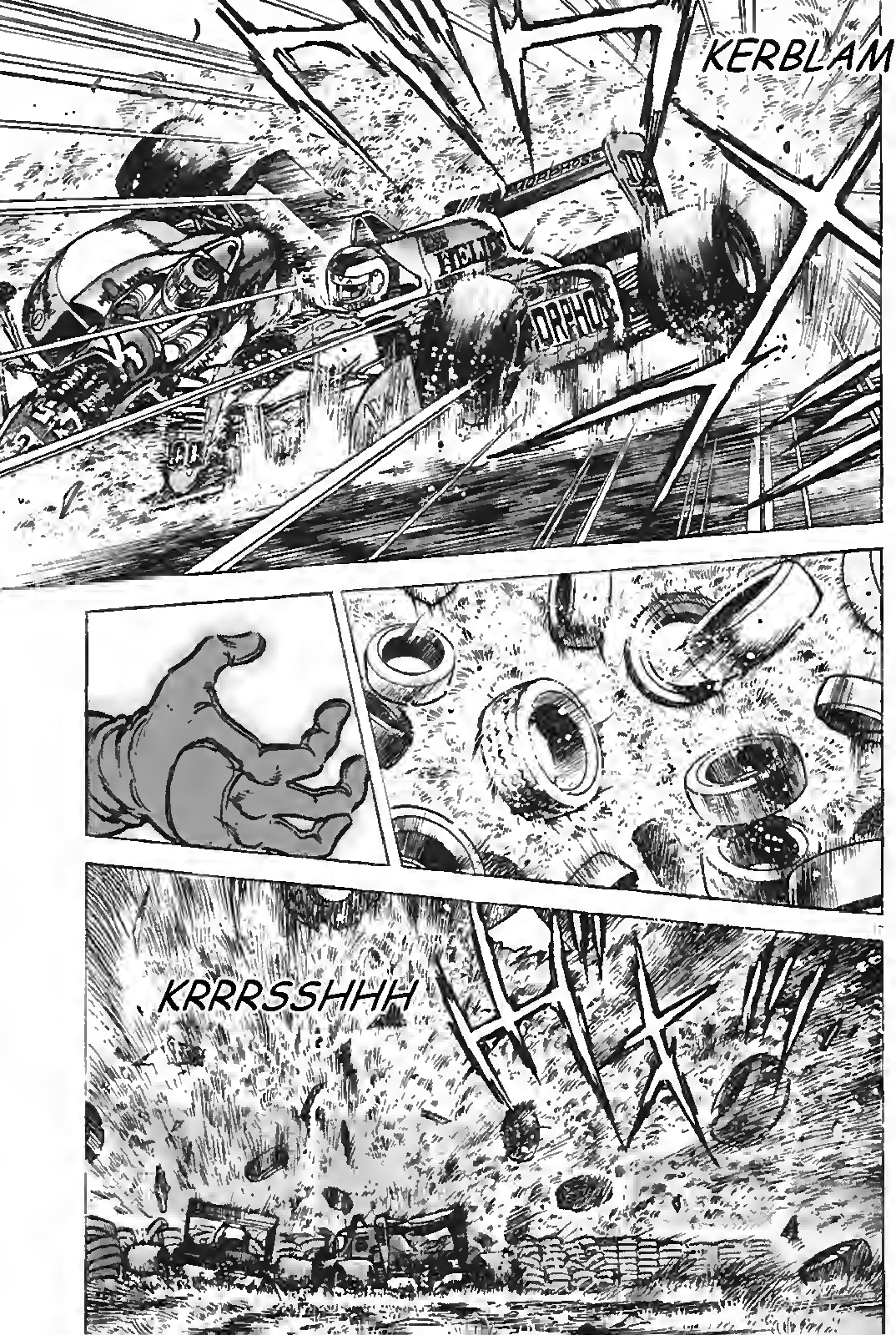
38
METAMORPHOSE
SKRR

SIUK
NOAH
METAMORPHOSE
HELIOS
GUNMA AKAGI
KRRRSH

!
What ...
... the hell!?
We have a crash! Our first and second place drivers have crashed!
MEIA!


GUNMA AKAGI
38
HELIOS
100

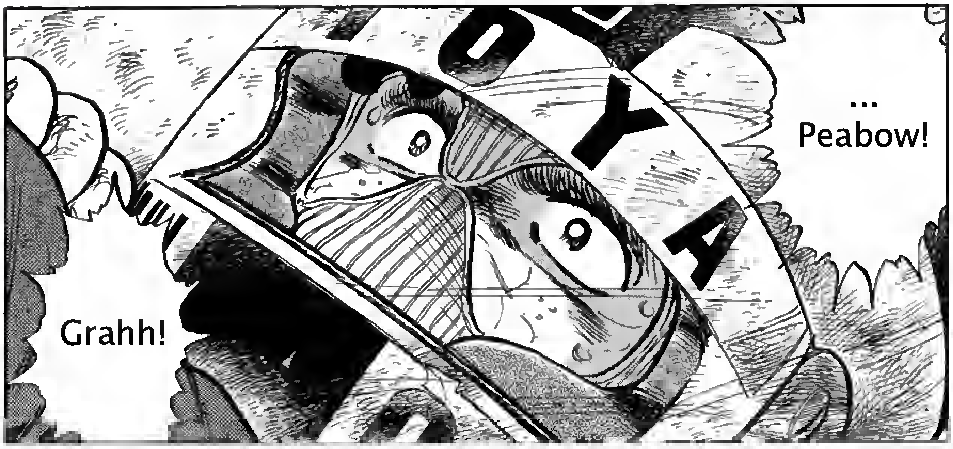
Gunma!
...
Ju...
Junko...


KERBLAM
KRRRSSHHH

Are the drivers all right!?
What on earth just happened!? Gunma dropped his speed and seemingly tried to block Otoya's path...
This is bad! Both drivers have gone off course and straight into the tire fence!
... killed ...
I...

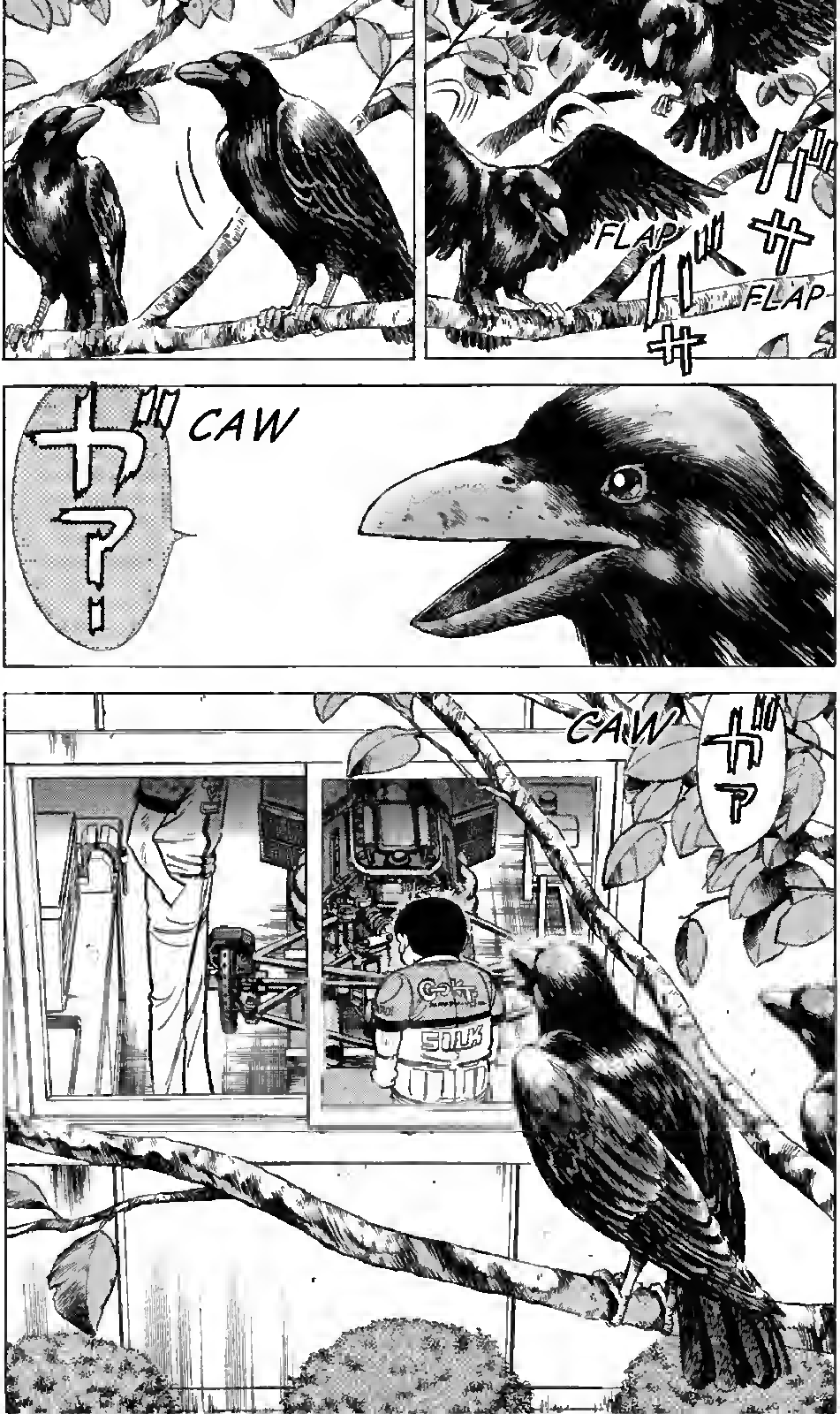
Chapter 9: Crows

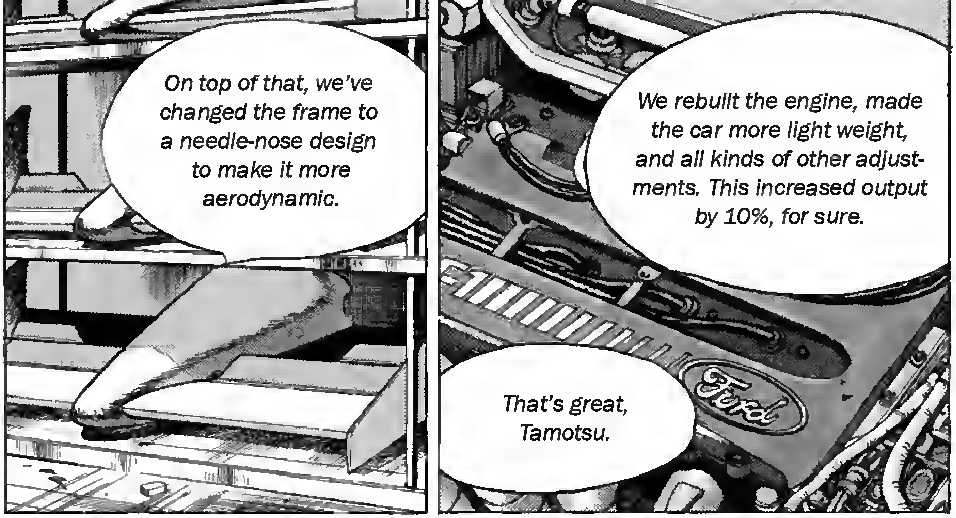
GUNMA AKAGI
TEAM
... killed ...
I... I...


OYA
Grahh!
... Peabow!

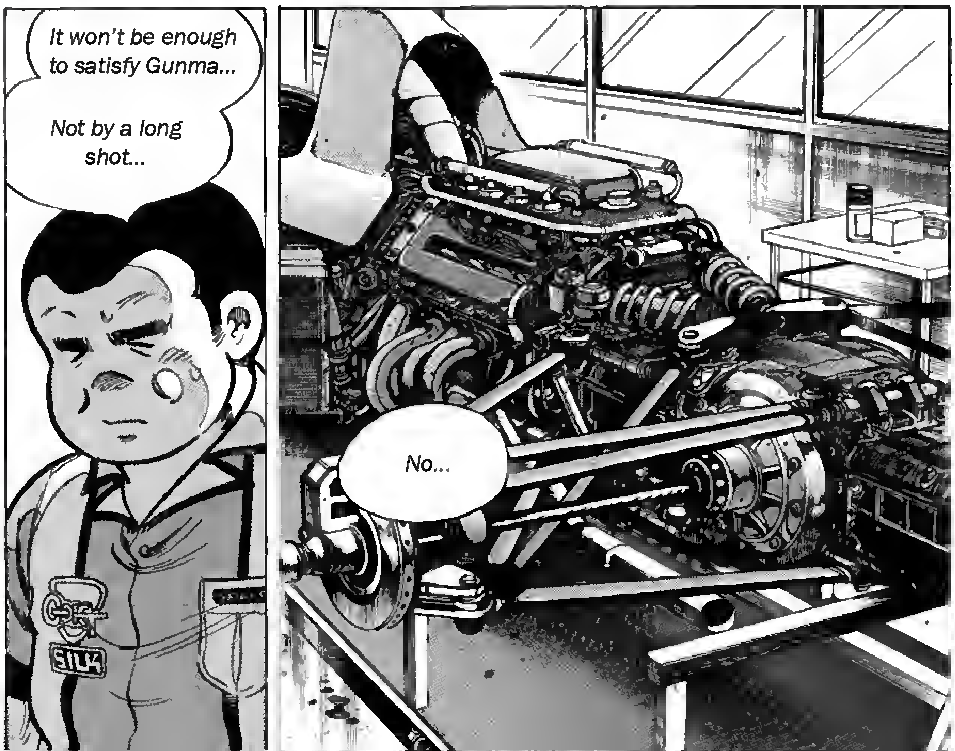
Grehh... Let go...
L...let go of me!

...Peabow.
I killed...
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP

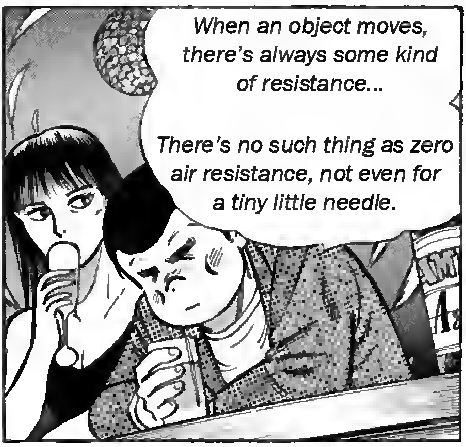

FLAP
FLAP
CAW
CAW


On top of that, we've changed the frame to a needle-nose design to make it more aerodynamic.
We rebuilt the engine, made the car more light weight, and all kinds of other adjustments. This increased output by 10%, for sure.
That's great, Tamotsu.
Ford

All right! I can't wait till Gunma sees this!
It might be more difficult to ride and adjust, but it's definitely faster than before.


It won't be enough to satisfy Gunma...
Not by a long shot...
No...
SILK

Hm?
He won't be satisfied...
RAYMOND REVUEBAR

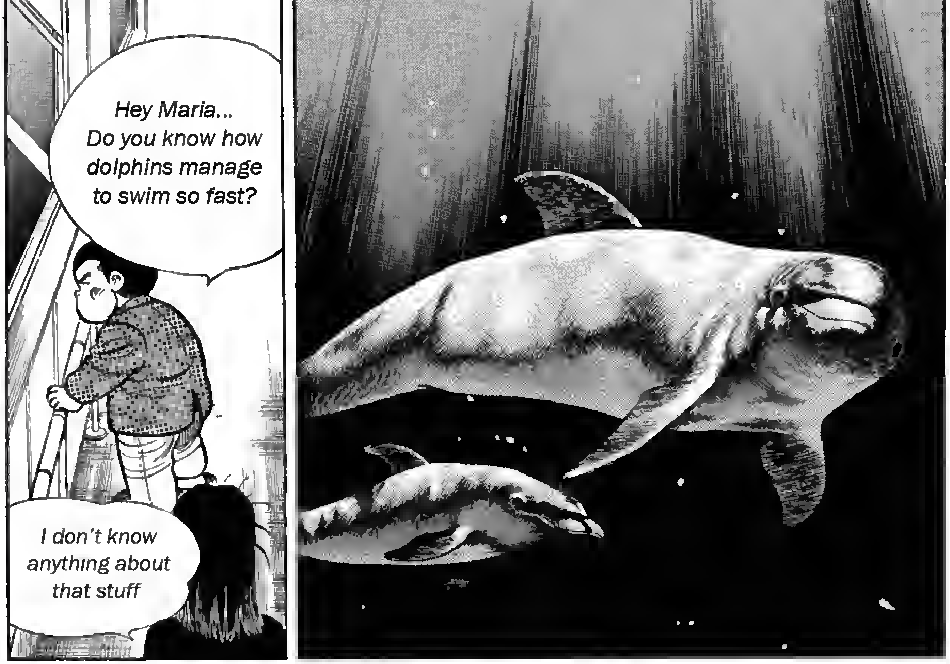

When an object moves, there's always some kind of resistance...
There's no such thing as zero air resistance, not even for a tiny little needle.

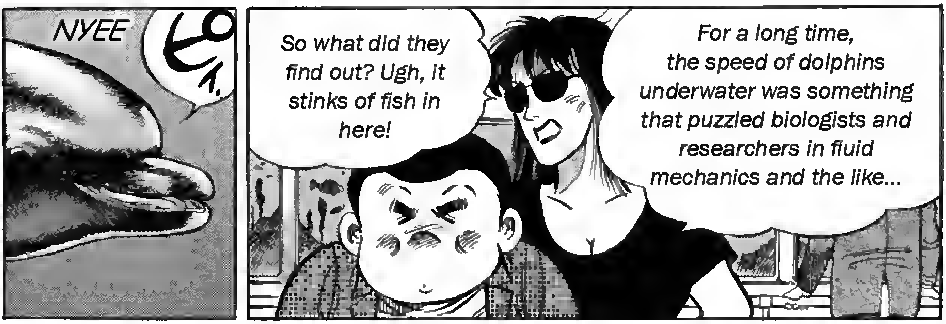
...
Weren't you satisfied the other night?

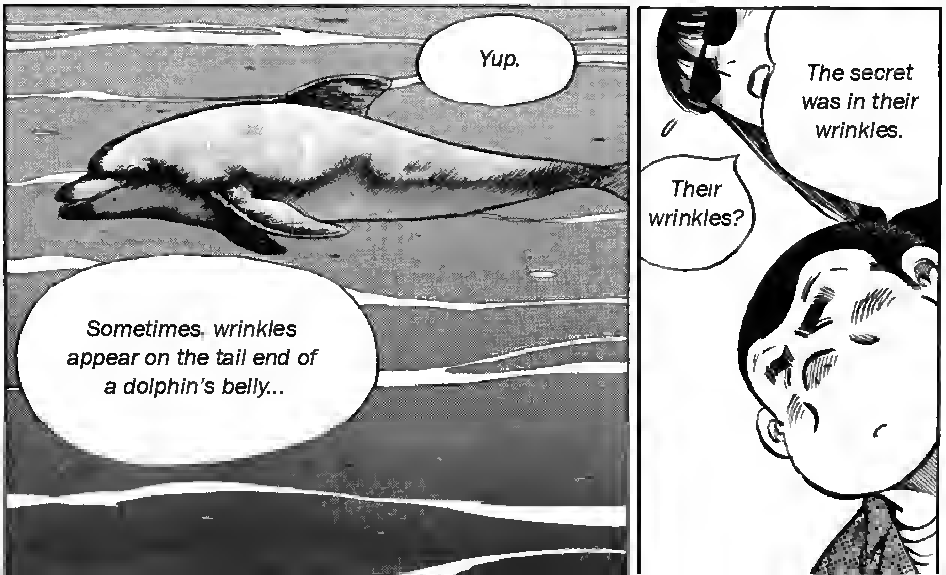
But...
The faster something moves, the greater the air resistance...

Say, Maria... Wanna go on a date tomorrow?
Everything feels better when there's a little... resistance!
HEHEHE

SPLASH
...
...
YEAHHHH
CLAP


Hey Maria... Do you know how dolphins manage to swim so fast?
I don't know anything about that stuff


NYEE
So what did they find out? Ugh, it stinks of fish in here!
For a long time, the speed of dolphins underwater was something that puzzled biologists and researchers in fluid mechanics and the like...


Yup.
Sometimes, wrinkles appear on the tail end of a dolphin's belly...
The secret was in their wrinkles.
Their wrinkles?

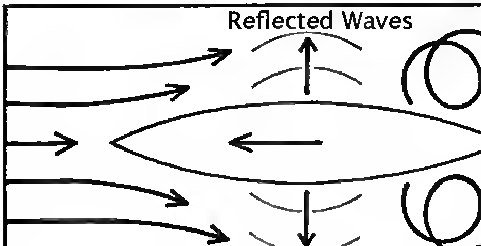
Amazing, isn't it?

...its wrinkles go through roughly two vibration cycles towards the rear.

I don't get it.

For example, when a dolphin speeds up suddenly, wrinkles might appear for just a second.

And when a dolphin swims fast...



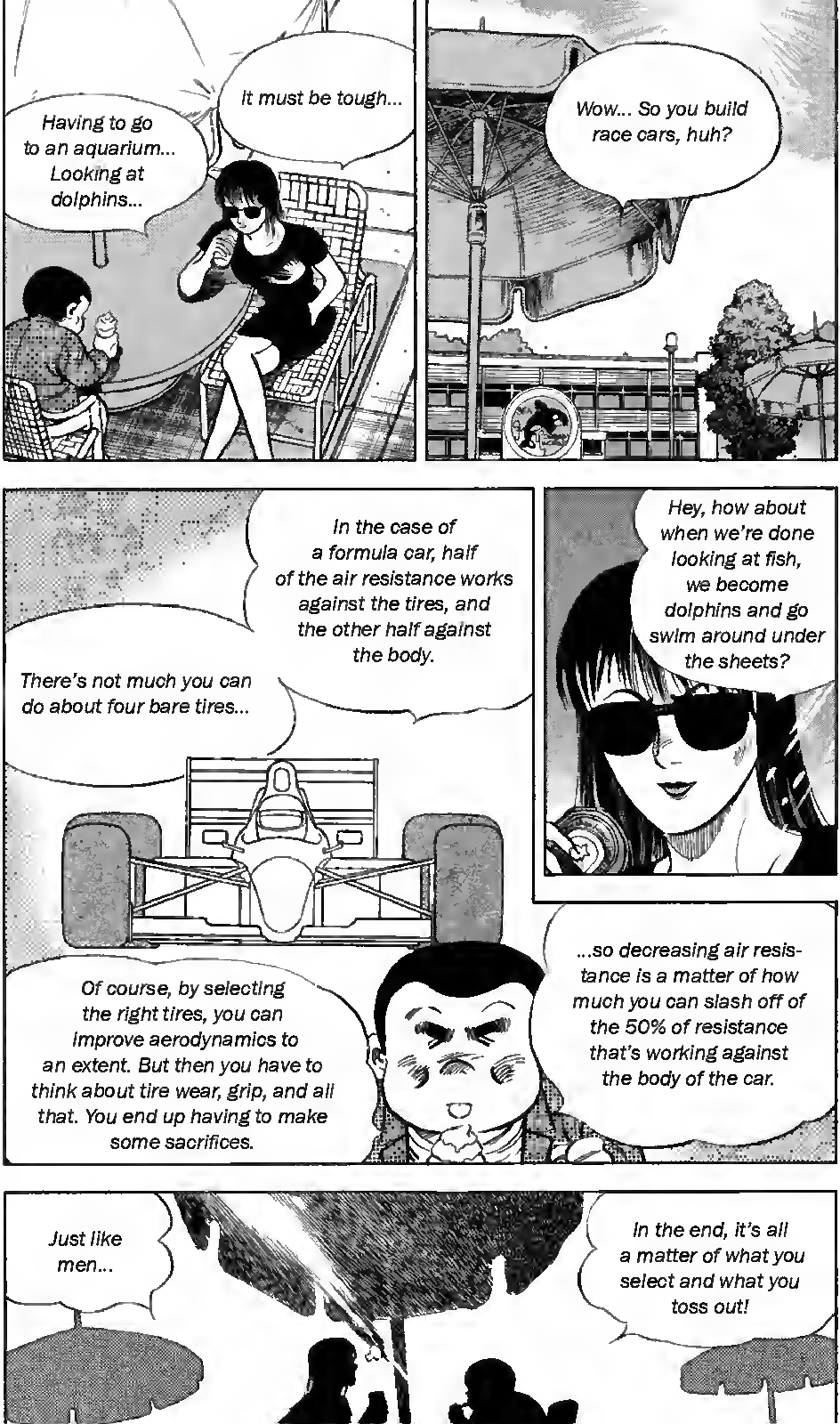
Basically, when a dolphin swims fast, transverse waves are reflected off their skin.

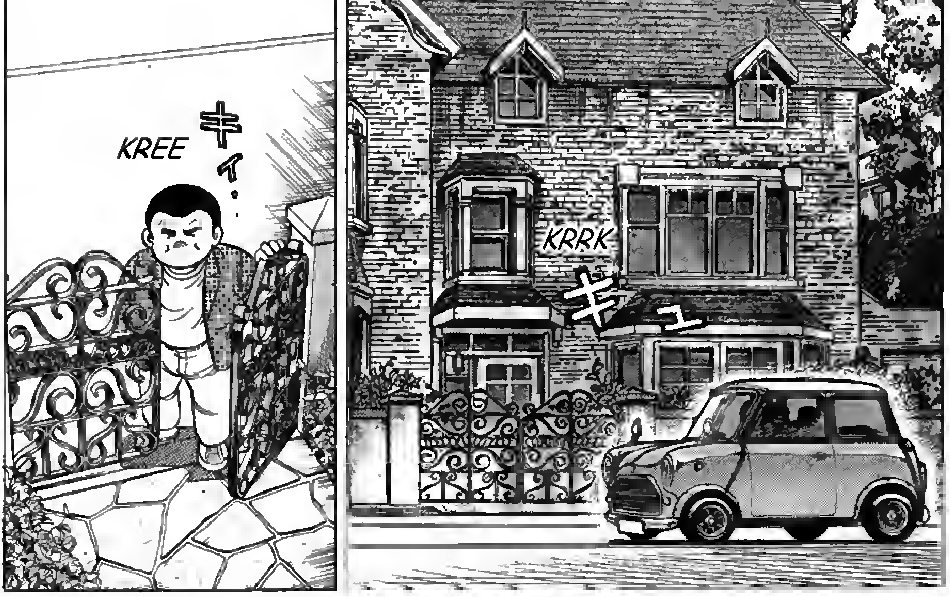
These waves create turbulence, creating fluid resistance.

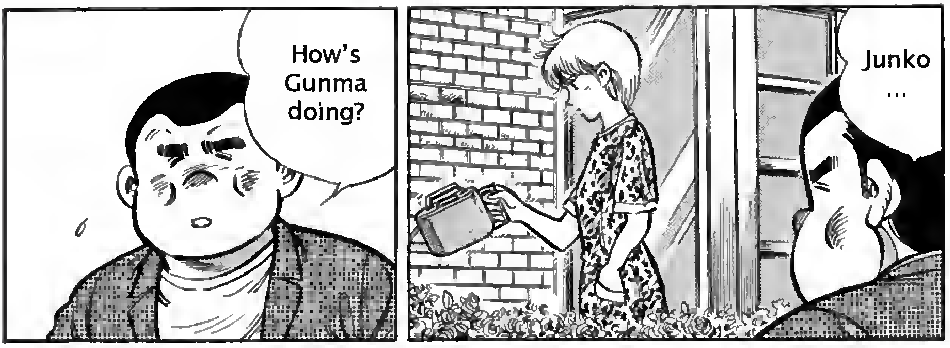
When the dolphins cause their wrinkles to vibrate, they synchronize these reflected waves, thereby absorbing energy and avoiding turbulence. It's like they have a sixth sense.

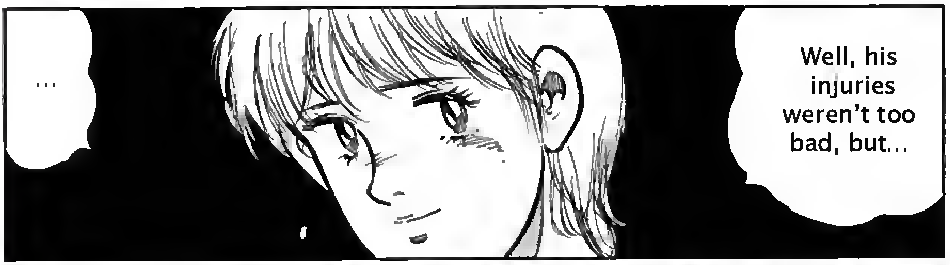
This concept can apply to the air as well as the water...

What do you do exactly?


Having to go to an aquarium... Looking at dolphins...
It must be tough...
Wow... So you build race cars, huh?
There's not much you can do about four bare tires...
In the case of a formula car, half of the air resistance works against the tires, and the other half against the body.
Hey, how about when we're done looking at fish, we become dolphins and go swim around under the sheets?
Of course, by selecting the right tires, you can improve aerodynamics to an extent. But then you have to think about tire wear, grip, and all that. You end up having to make some sacrifices.
...so decreasing air resistance is a matter of how much you can slash off of the 50% of resistance that's working against the body of the car.
Just like men...
In the end, it's all a matter of what you select and what you toss out!


KREE
キィ
KRRK
ギュ

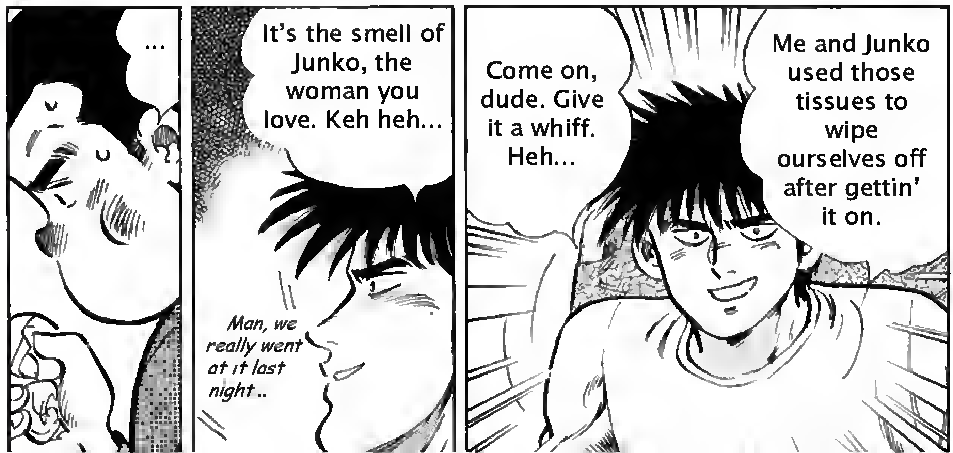

How's Gunma doing?
Junko ...


...
Well, his injuries weren't too bad, but...

...
Gun-ma...
カチ
K-CHIK

That was stupid what you did out there... You're not some delinquent street racer...
I don't know what Otoya said to you...
...but why'd you have to crash on purpose?
...

Hey Tamotsu, could you pick up those tissues that are scattered around over there?
Man, it's such a mess...
Does it smell?

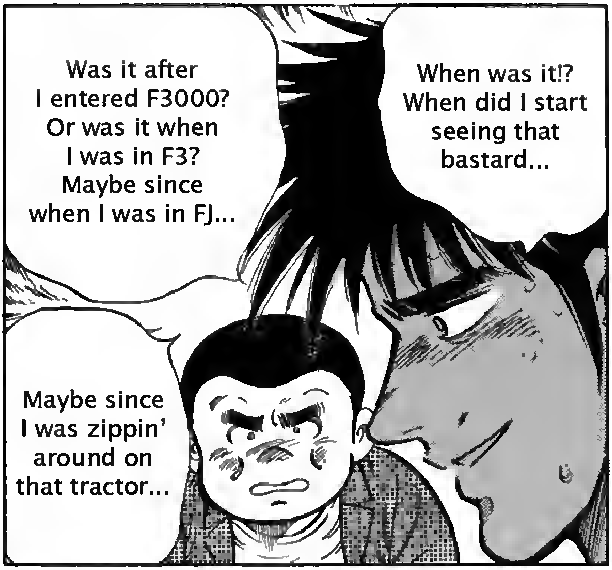

Me and Junko used those tissues to wipe ourselves off after gettin' it on.
Come on, dude. Give it a whiff. Heh...
It's the smell of Junko, the woman you love. Keh heh...
Man, we really went at it last night..
...

...
You wanna make me mad, so I'll build you some kind of death trap of a car?
That's enough, Gunma. Why you tryin' to wind me up like that...?
I'm signing a con-tract with McLaren!
I don't expect nothin' from you no more, you little punk.
Heh, like you could even if you tried.
I'm saying sayonara to you tools!
!?
I'm dead serious.
Y...You're kidding, right!?

Either way, it's a lot better than relying on you guys.
Is McLaren offering you a car that you want?
Hurry up and hang yourself or pop a bunch of pills or somethin'!
If you wanna die that bad, quit tryin' to be so dramatic!
Who knows? Maybe they will...
!
ビクッ
TWITCH
カロカロ
WHACK
Shut up! You sound just like Otoya now!
Not that I want to live, either, but...
Who told you I wanted to die!?
If you wanna die, why don't just hurry up and...
You're gonna leave Junko behind, abandon your team, forget the dream we had together...?

It's worth losing my life over!
I'm gonna pass him no matter what!
...there's him. That black shadow who's always racing ahead of me!

It doesn't matter. I've always been racing towards it!
Or maybe even since I was born!
The reason I started racing was to pass it...


When was it!? When did I start seeing that bastard...
Was it after I entered F3000? Or was it when I was in F3? Maybe since when I was in FJ...
Maybe since I was zippin' around on that tractor...

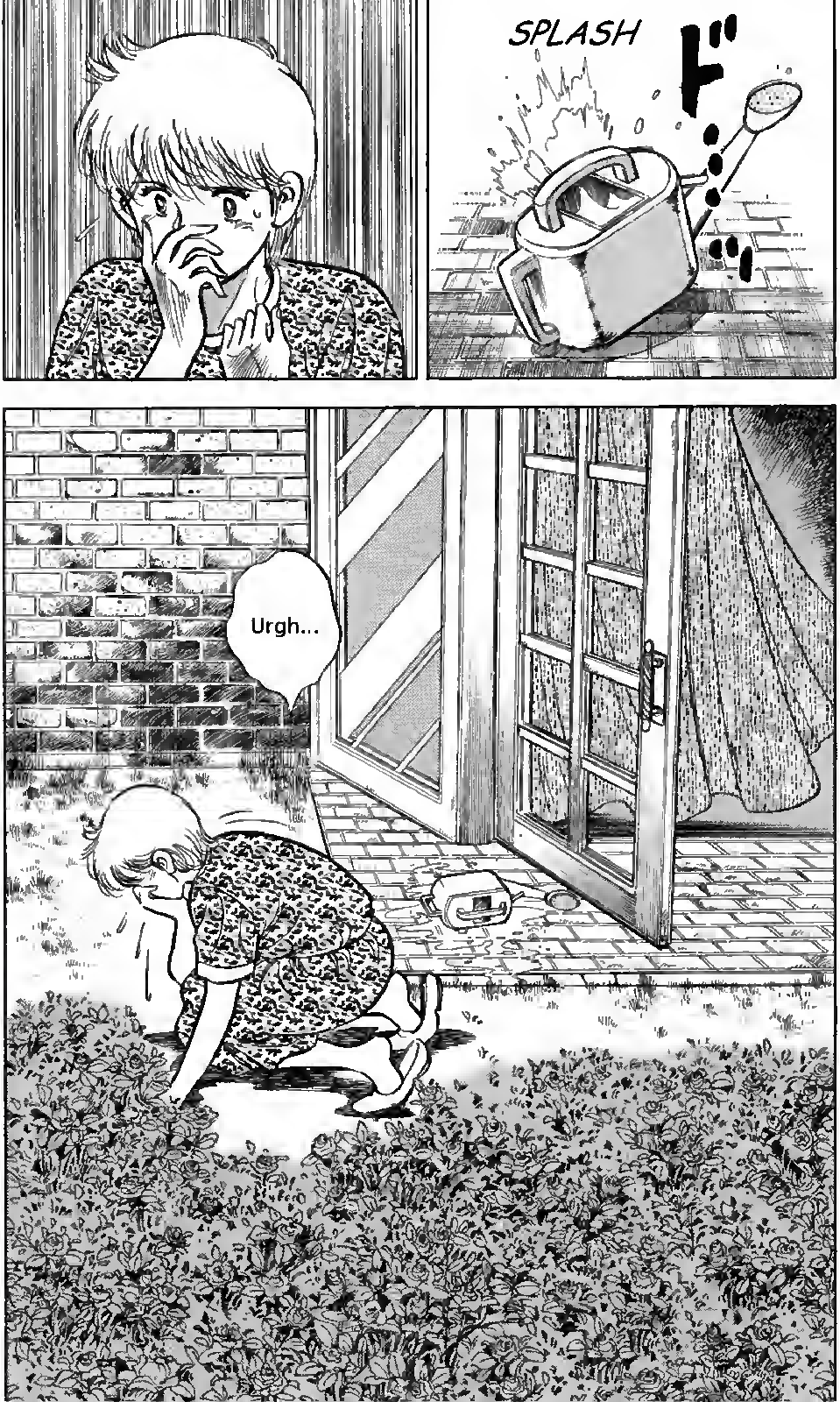
And Ryuji... Maybe even Ryuji...
Sako went crazy, and Peabow died.
Hijiri too.
Yuki died because of it.
I raced.
That black shadow might be all their grudges combined...

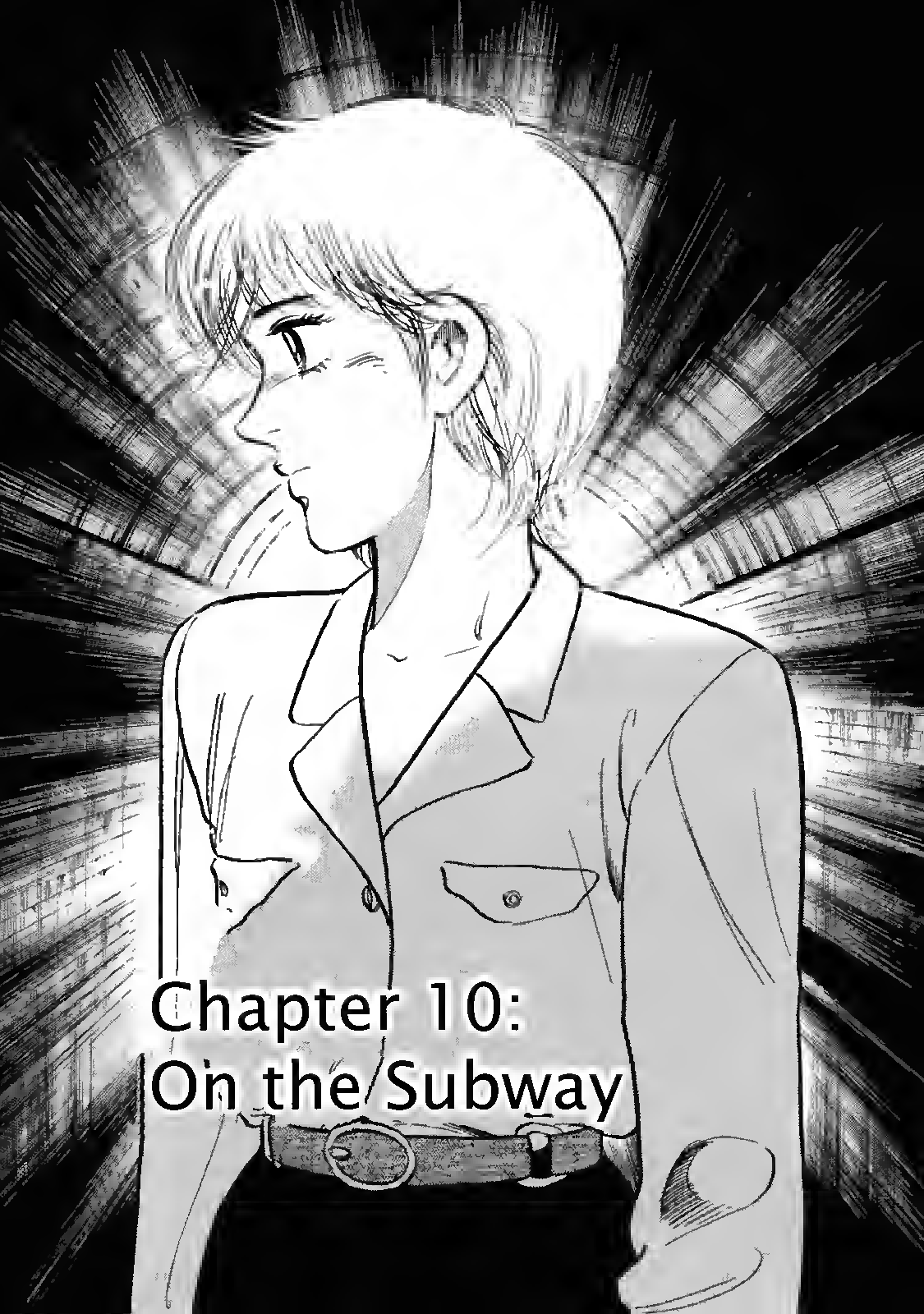
Is it Death!? Is it a ghost?

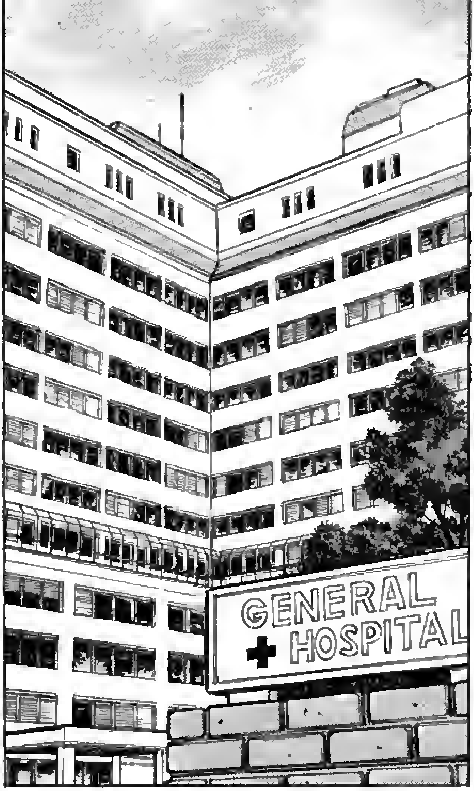
I have to beat that shadow! Even if it costs me my life, I'm gonna pass that shadow!
If there's any way I can make up for those who died because of me, it's this!
I raced towards it! I raced towards that shadow!
But I don't care about none of that!
...
...
Am I wrong, Tamotsu!?
I won't let anybody kill you!
Don't go to McLaren, Gunma!
...who's gonna kill you!
Because I'm the one...

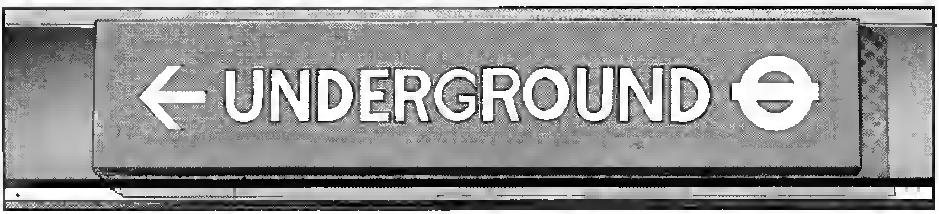
Is that...
...a promise ...
... Mr. Genius?

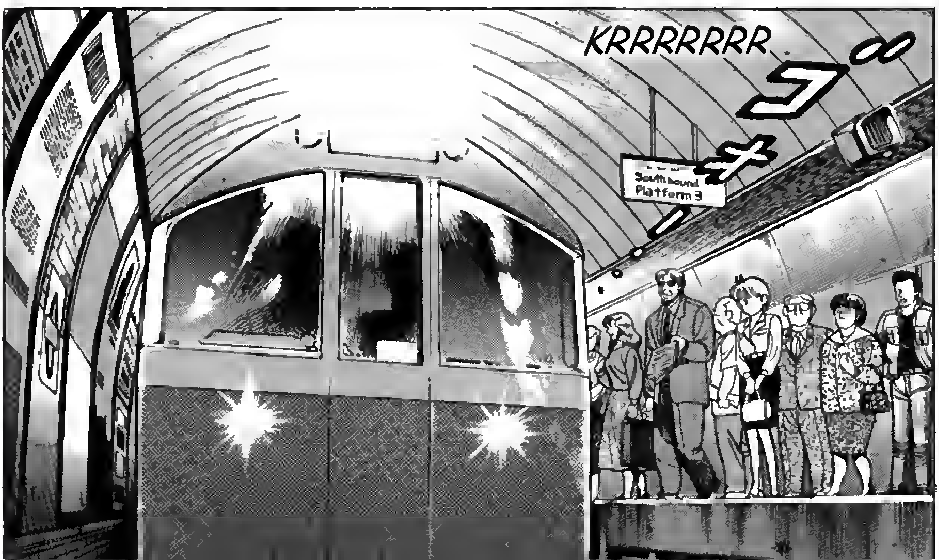
...
NOD


SPLASH
Urgh...

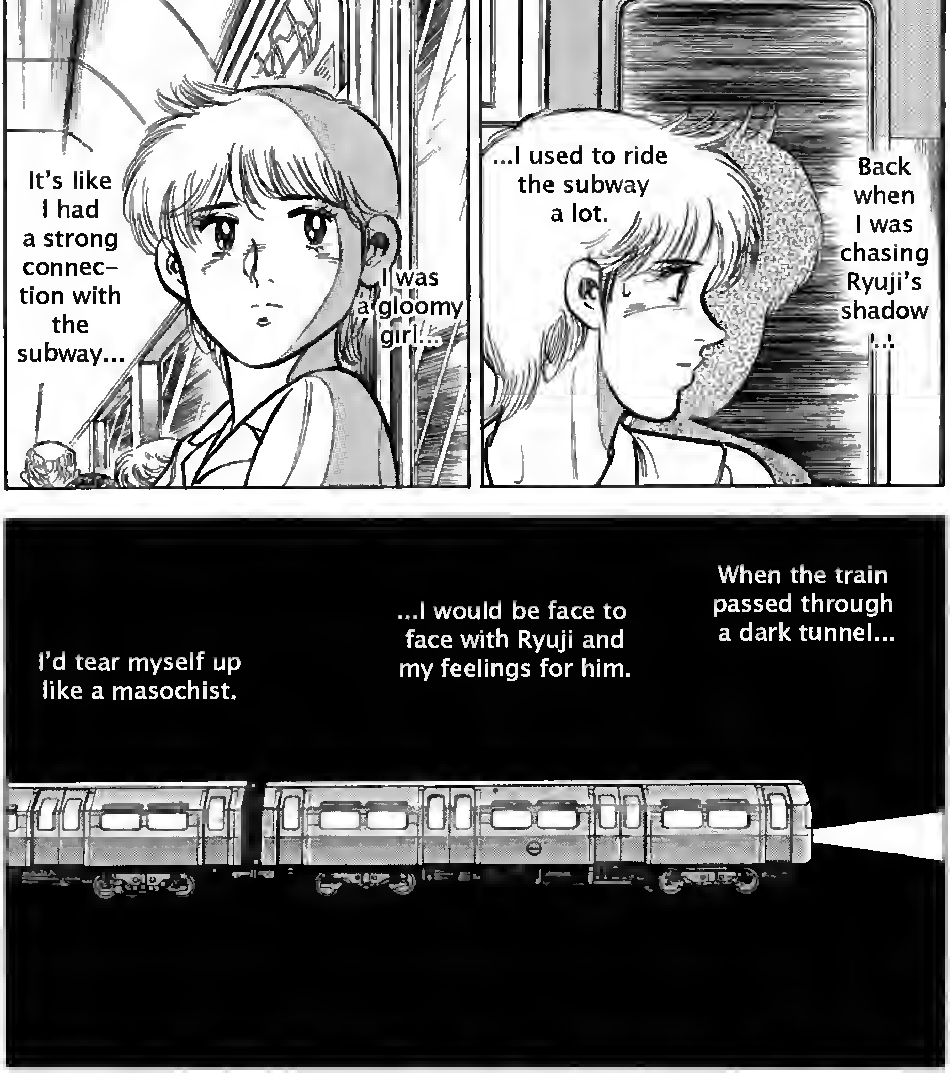

Chapter 10:
On the Subway

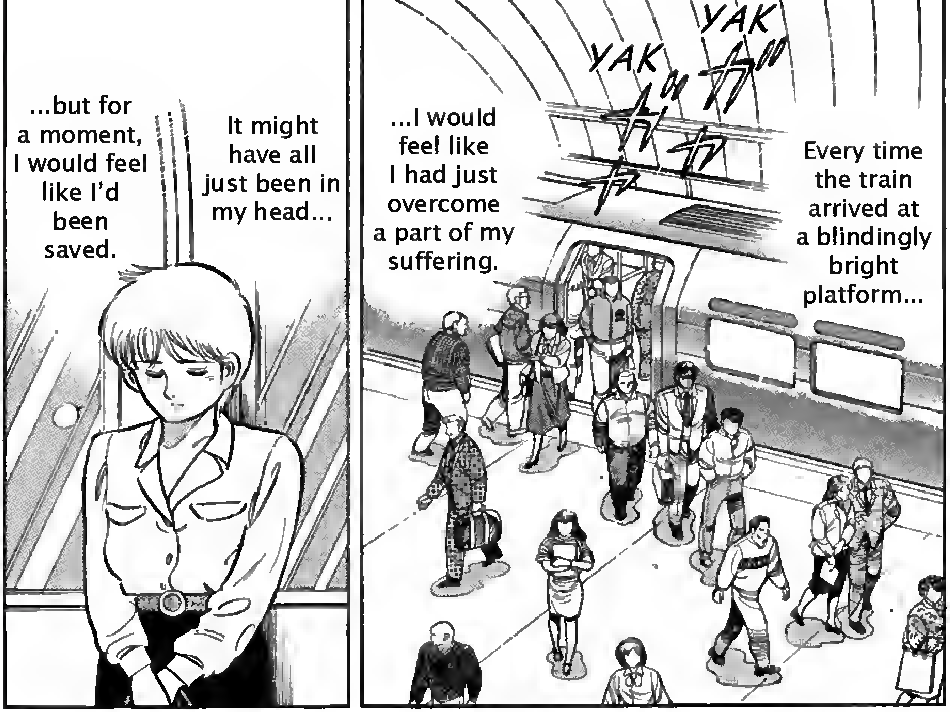

GENERAL
HOSPITAL


← UNDERGROUND

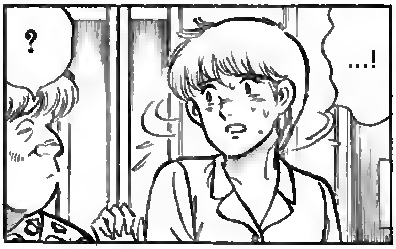

KRRRRRRR
Southbound
Platform 3

シュ――……
PSHOO
PATANG
ゴォォォ――
KRRR
ガタ
KATUNK
KRRRRR
ゴォォォ――
KRRR
ゴ
ン
…

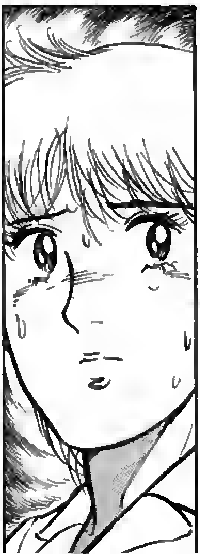

It's like I had a strong connec-tion with the subway...
I was a gloomy girl...
...I used to ride the subway a lot.
Back when I was chasing Ryuji's shadow...
I'd tear myself up like a masochist.
...I would be face to face with Ryuji and my feelings for him.
When the train passed through a dark tunnel...
...before the light appeared to save me.
But those tunnels only lasted four or five minutes at the most...
The tunnels rejected me no matter where I went.
The walls ignored me as they sped by.
Lonely dark-ness.

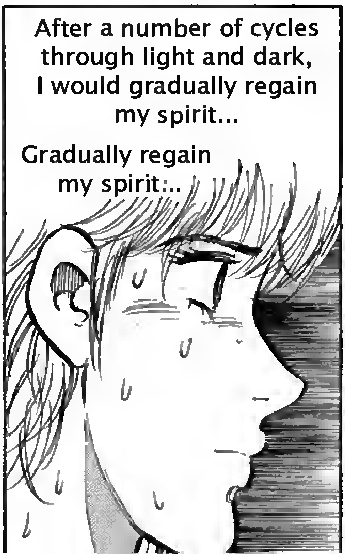

...but for a moment, I would feel like I'd been saved.
It might have all just been in my head...
...I would feel like I had just overcome a part of my suffering.
YAK
YAK
Every time the train arrived at a blindingly bright platform...

Right back into the darkness...
Then, after that...
...and put a stop to my emotions.
I would collect my thoughts...


?
...!

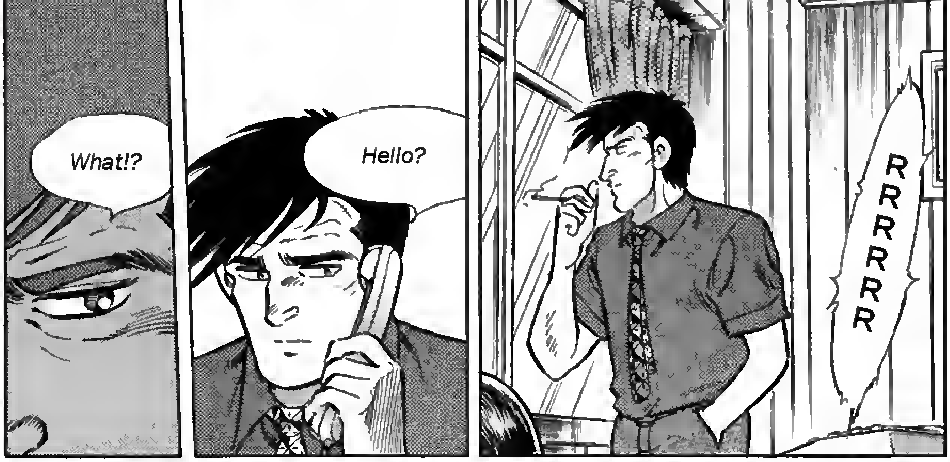
はあ
HUFF
HUFF
はあ
はあ
HUFF
HUFF
はあ



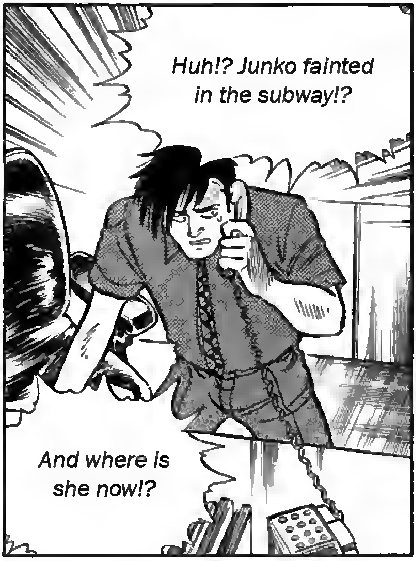

After a number of cycles through light and dark, I would gradually regain my spirit...
Gradually regain my spirit...

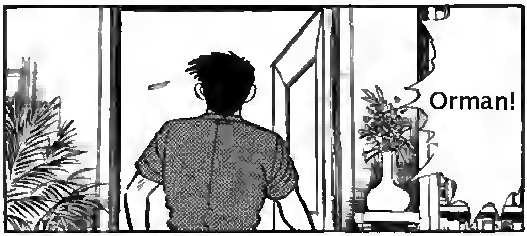
KRRRRRRR
!!

KRRRRRRR


What!?
Hello?
RRRRR

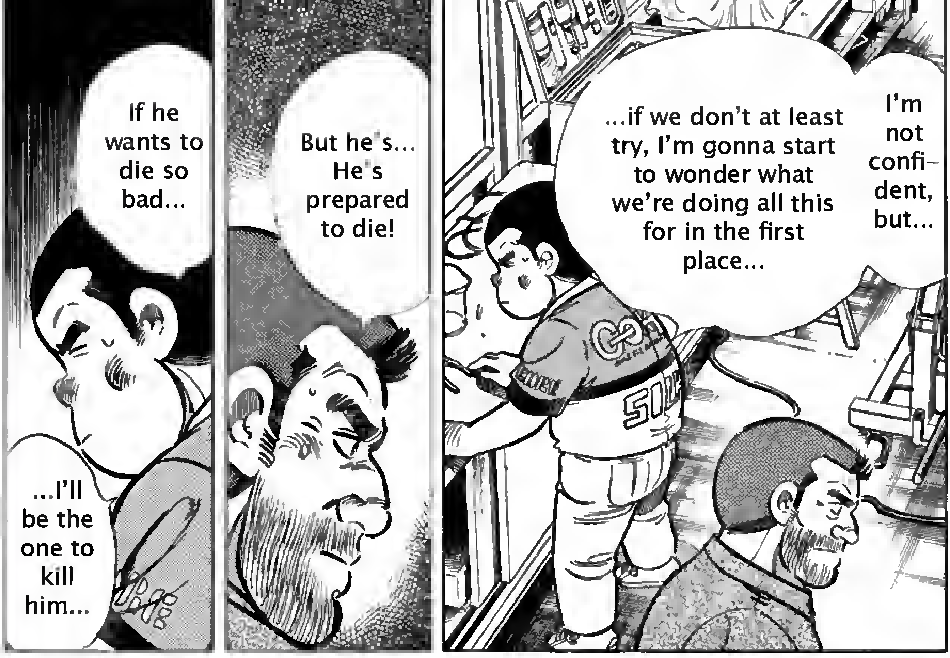
All right, thanks.
I'll be right there.


Huh!? Junko fainted in the subway!?
And where is she now!?


Orman!

You confident you can do it?
I promised Gunma I'd build him the car that he wanted.

...Gunma said he's not going to sign the contract with McLaren?
So...
Yeah.

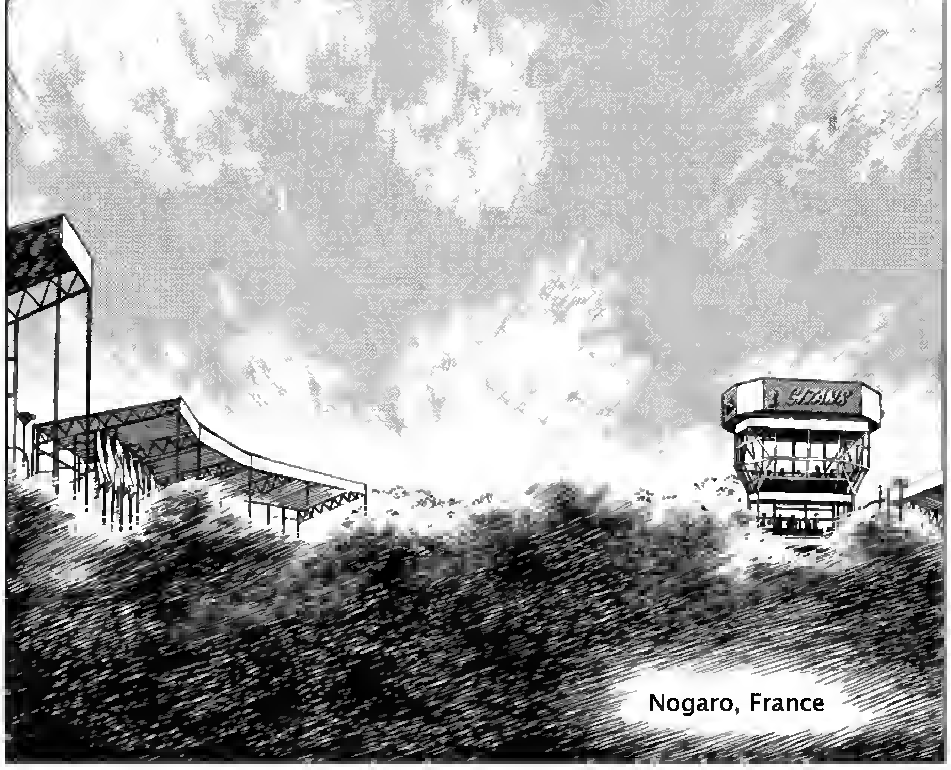

If he wants to die so bad...
...I'll be the one to kill him...
But he's... He's prepared to die!
...if we don't at least try, I'm gonna start to wonder what we're doing all this for in the first place...
I'm not confi-dent, but...

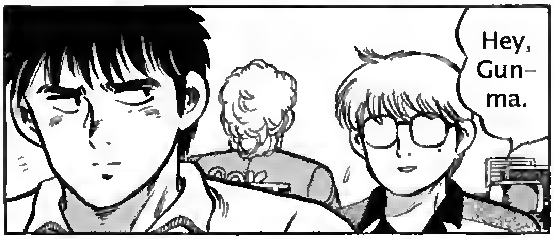
Your friend wants to commit harakiri, so you pick up the sword to cut off his head... Hah!
You've really given this some thought, huh.

!?
Orman, it's Junko...
SLAM
Don't let him die! We'll save that for the very end!
All right, then. Build it the way you want! I don't care if we run into a few problems with regulations. I'll take responsibility. Just one thing...
...

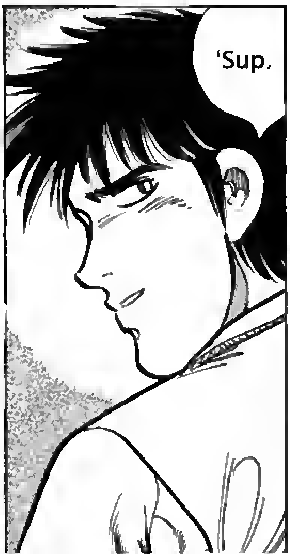
You were shouting, "I can't breathe, get me out of here, where's the light..." Do you remember?
She started to get violent. She'd gone absolutely mental.
She really gave us a scare. It's a good thing the passenger next to her restrained her.
No worries at all. It's part of my job.
You should take her to see a doctor. Although by the looks of it, she's already been to a hospital...
Thank you for all your help.
A medical examination card...?
Is she neurotic?
I mean, when I got her to open her bag to find your phone number, I found a medical examination card...
PHARMACY
HUNTSMAN

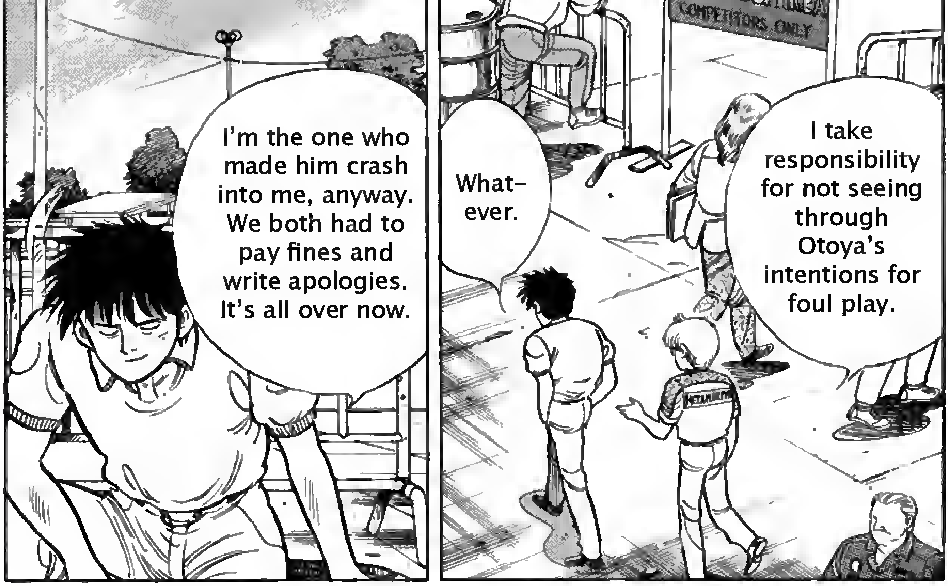
Yeah, I'm fine now.
Are you sure you don't wanna see a doctor?
Don't worry about it.
I'm sorry I alarmed you all like that just before we leave for Nogaro.
No, Orman, it's fine! Really!
You're under a lot of pressure. You should get some rest. Take a few days off.
...
...!?
I'm going to Nogaro with you! I'm going with you! Please!
...

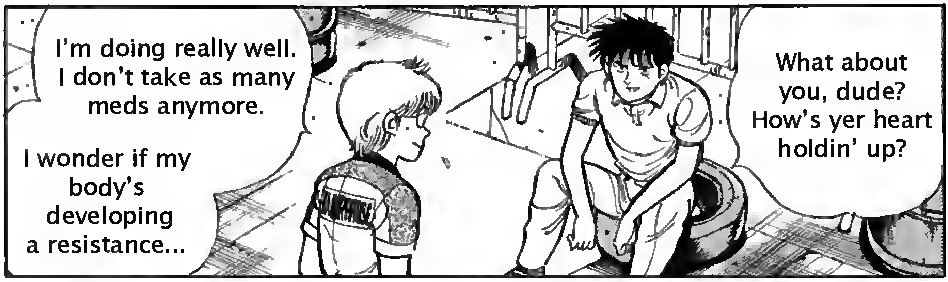

Nogaro, France

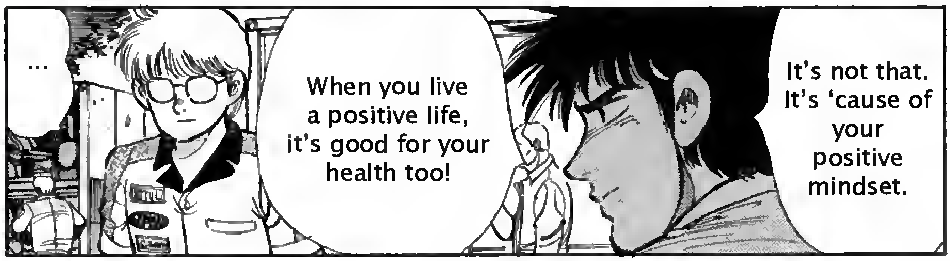

Hey, Gun-ma.

I wanna apologize for everything.


'Sup.

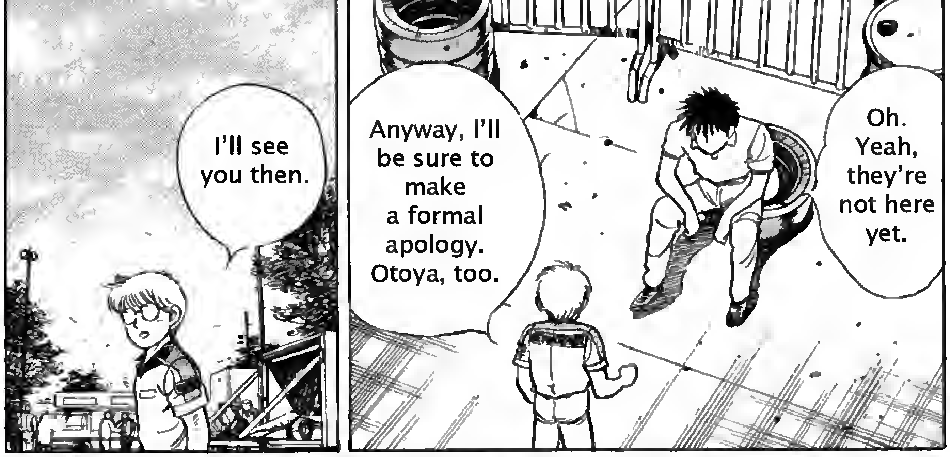

I'm the one who made him crash into me, anyway. We both had to pay fines and write apologies. It's all over now.
What– ever.
I take responsibility for not seeing through Otoya's intentions for foul play.
COMPETITORS ONLY


I'm doing really well. I don't take as many meds anymore.
I wonder if my body's developing a resistance...
What about you, dude? How's yer heart holdin' up?

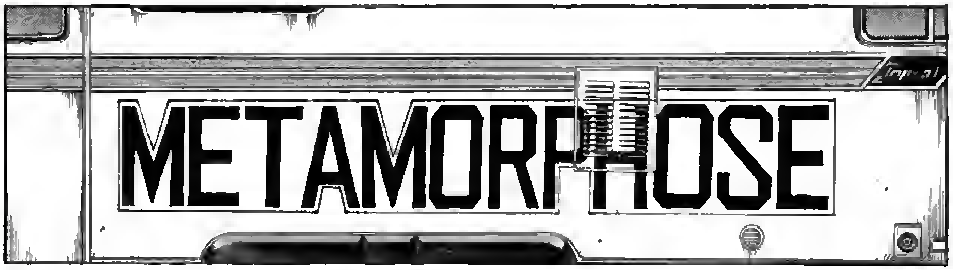

...
When you live a positive life, it's good for your health too!
It's not that. It's 'cause of your positive mindset.

I wanted to, but...
What happened? I thought you wanted to beat me.
...I'm thinking of quitting the team.
You know...

...
I mean, would it bring me even an ounce of happiness?
...I started thinking, even if Otoya beat you, what would that mean to me?
He doesn't understand what it means to beat someone.
Plus, he can't beat you.
You can't beat someone through hatred...
What does it mean to beat some-one?
So, where's your team?
Well, I haven't decided on it yet. To be honest, I'm not sure what to do.
An... illu-sion!?
With only hatred for the person you're trying to beat, you end up without a realistic perception of that person.
It's like trying to race past an illusion.


I'll see you then.
Anyway, I'll be sure to make a formal apology. Otoya, too.
Oh. Yeah, they're not here yet.

...
An illusion, huh?


METAMORPHOSE

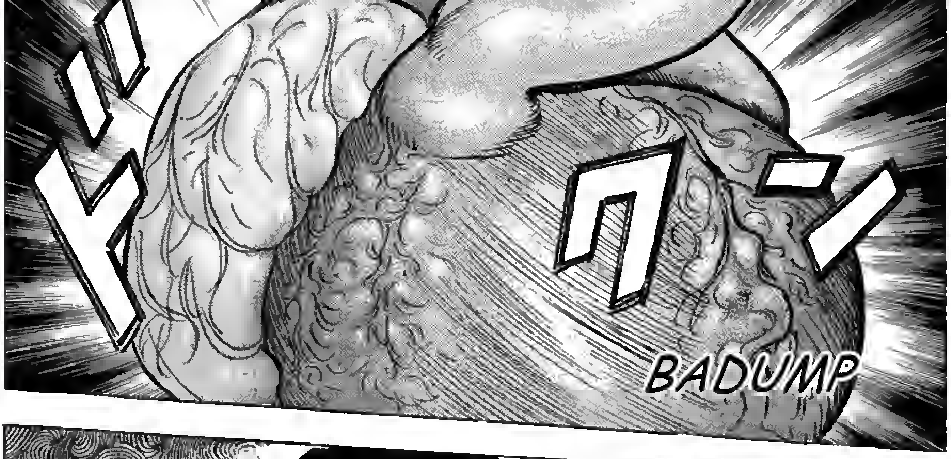
!?

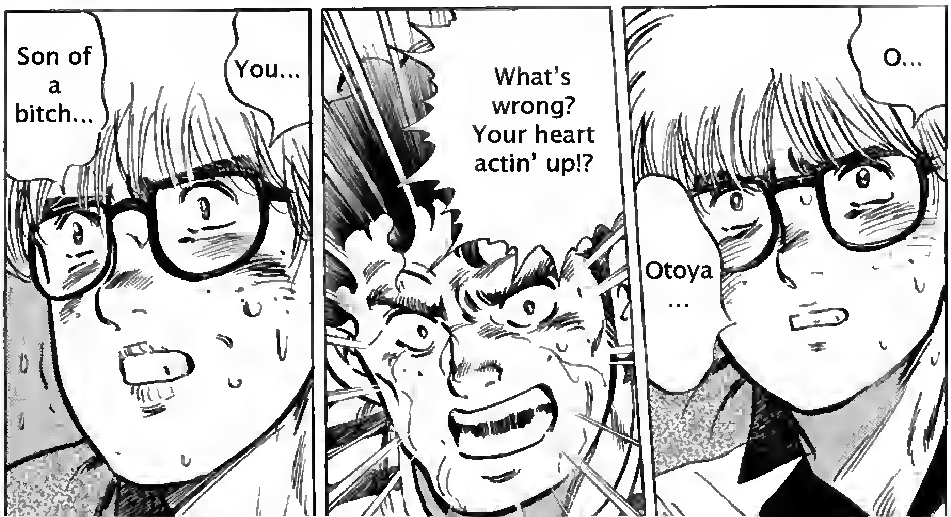
Well well, hey there coach.
Oh.
Ah.
12
Otoya!
Heh. She's a weird one. Heh heh. She thinks my injuries are sexy.
I thought I told you to stop bringing women in the motorhome.

We're both takin' care of business, that's all!
You went out talkin' things out with your brother, so I was screwing this chick here!
Careful, your heart might start actin' up!
What, are you mad now? Is the big coach gonna get mad?
I told you to quit being so half-assed all the time!
I went to apologize for what happened the other day. You need to go over there too and...
I look up to him, and I love him! That's why I wanna beat him on the track!
I... I love my brother!
That does it... Let me make one thing clear, Otoya.
You wanna beat Gunma, don't you!? Then quit your half-assed attitude and hate his guts!
Hate him! You gotta want to kill him!
WHAP

THUD
Urgh...
Ugh...
Still talkin' like a spoiled brat...
Guess I gotta beat it outta ya!

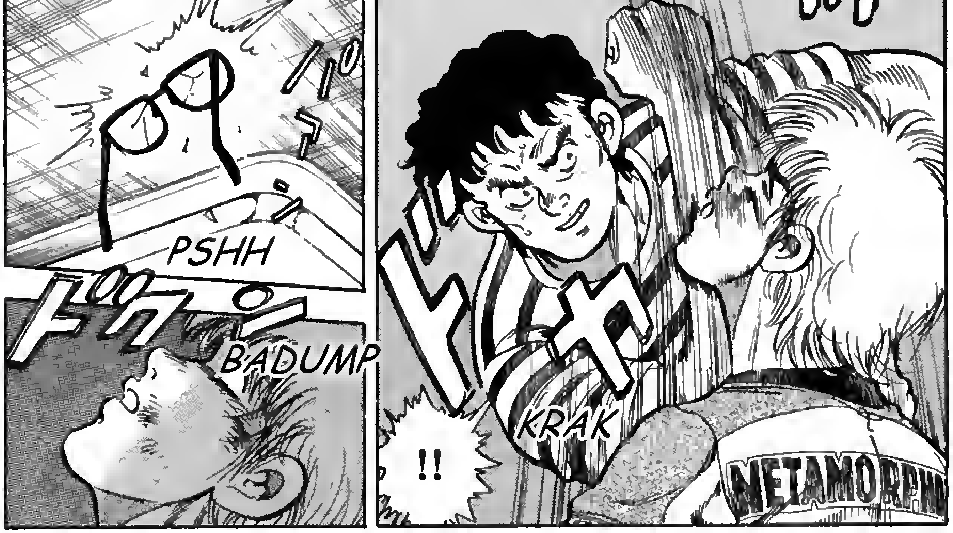
Chapter 11: Fired

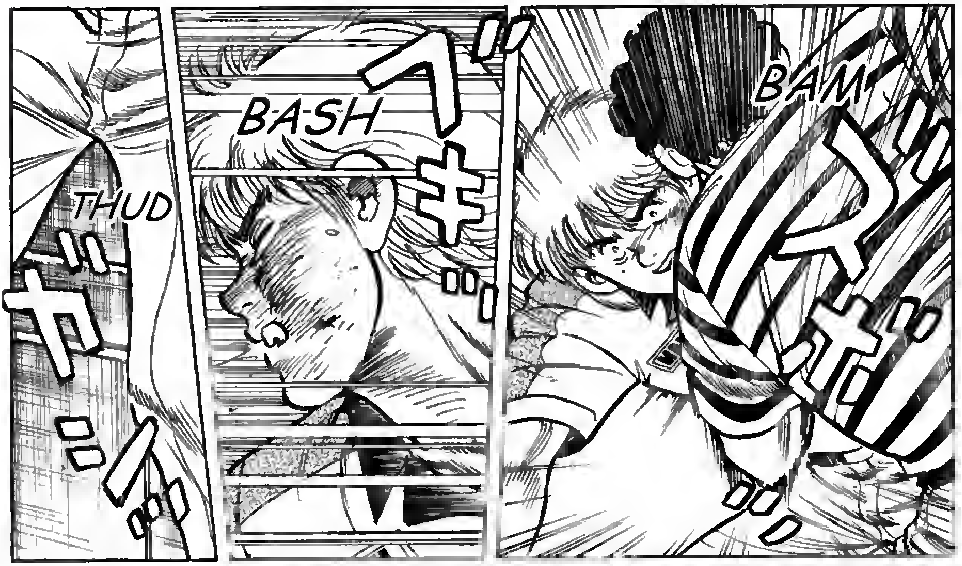

ドクン
BADUMP


Son of a bitch...
You...
What's wrong? Your heart actin' up!?
O...
Otoya ...

THUD
Thinkin' you're some kinda genius!
WHAM
I've always hated the way you act!
You wanna know somet hin'!?
And now you're telling me this and that...
I got more experience in my left nut than you'll ever have in your life!
You're just a brat with a silver spoon up your ass. And all of the sudden you're the big coach!
... Otoya?
Do you even know... what you're doing...
Huh, coach!?
Or are you gonna run to your big brother for help!?
What's wrong, coach!? Come at me! What's the matter, are you just gonna take it?

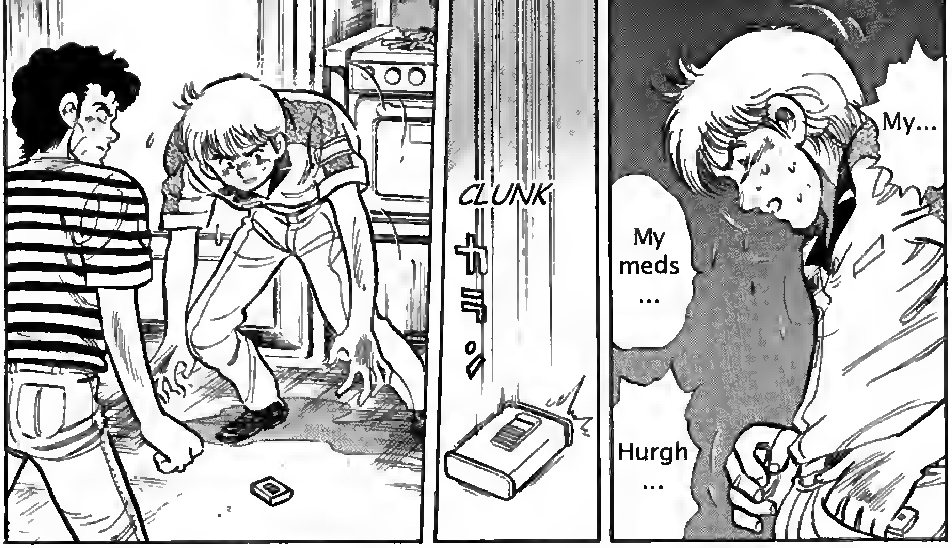
...
Heh...
BASH
...freakin' through with you!
You got a little fight in you then, huh?
BADUMP
You know what? I am...

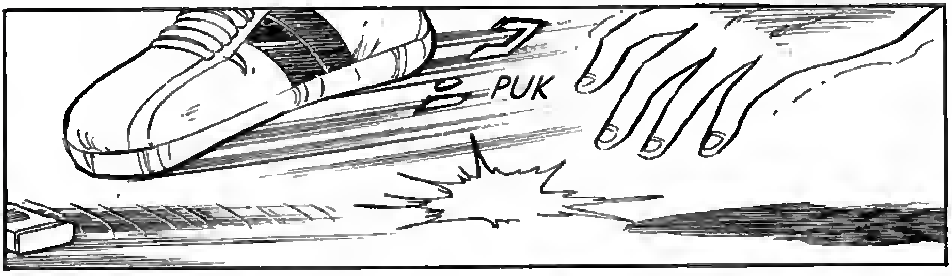

PSHH
BADUMP
KRAK
!!

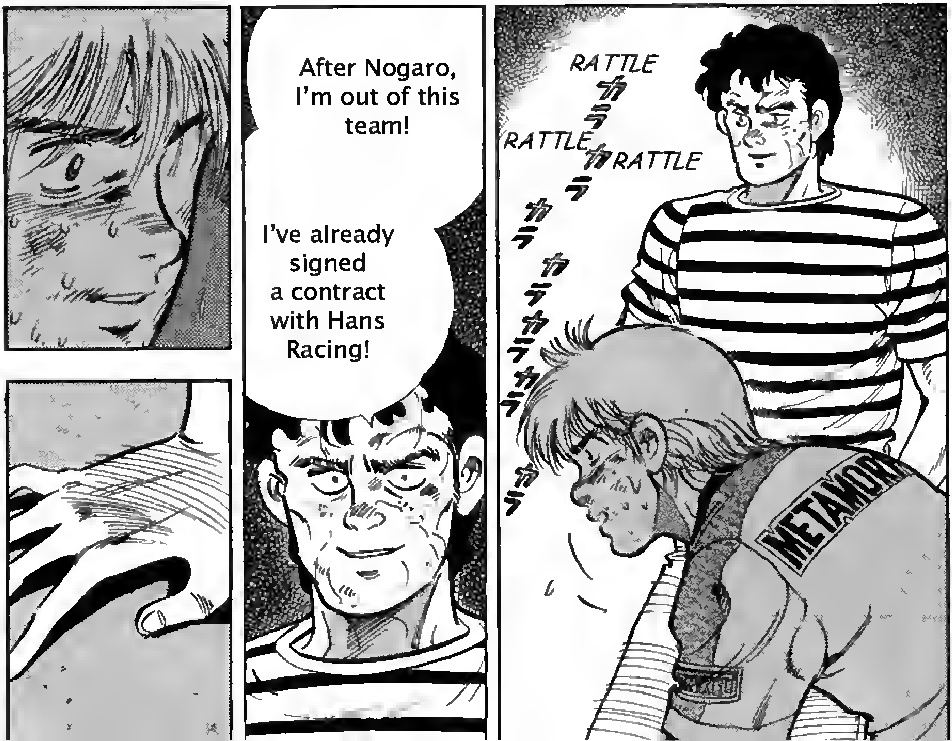

THUD
BASH
BAM

So what!?
We made it to where we are... Because we worked together...
Maybe... You couldn't stand me... But...

Heh... You know what?
I'm gettin' sick and tired of...
I won't forgive you for this!
WHAP
BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP
Hurgh ...
Agh ...
Urrrgh ...
WOBBLE
Urgh...


CLUNK
My...
My meds ...
Hurgh ...

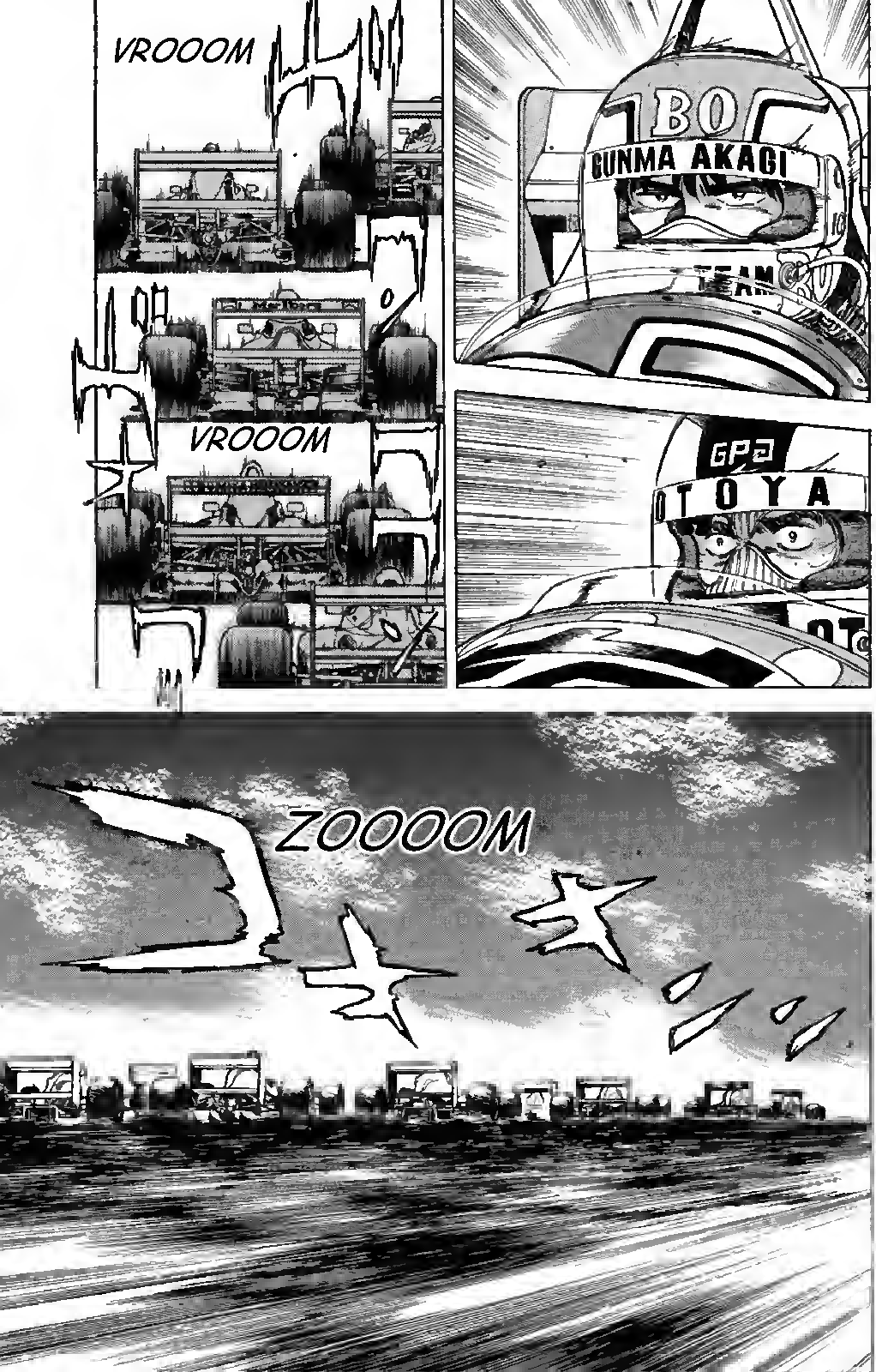

PUK


After Nogaro, I'm out of this team!
I've already signed a contract with Hans Racing!
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
METAMOR

Anyway, that's all there is to say.
...
SLAM
I just wanted to finish the season, just out of obligation...
They've been trying to get me on their team for a while now.
PLIP
Huff...
Huff...
Huff...
Huff...
METAMORPHOSE

METAMORPHOSE
Otoya...
You won't get away with this!

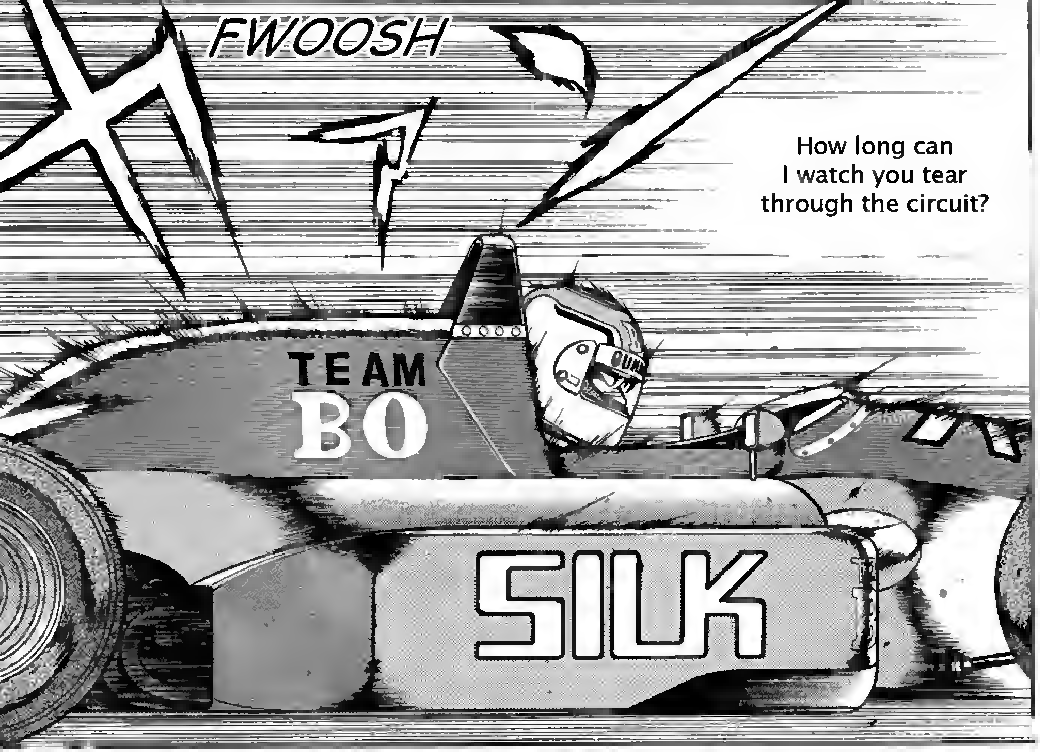
ZWOOOOM
Final race of the Nogaro GP
VROOOM
Marlboro
30

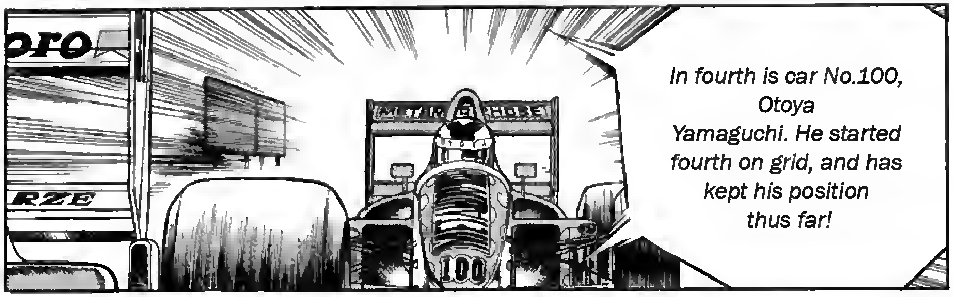

VROOOM
VROOOM
GUNMA AKAGI
GP2
OTOYA
ZOOOOM

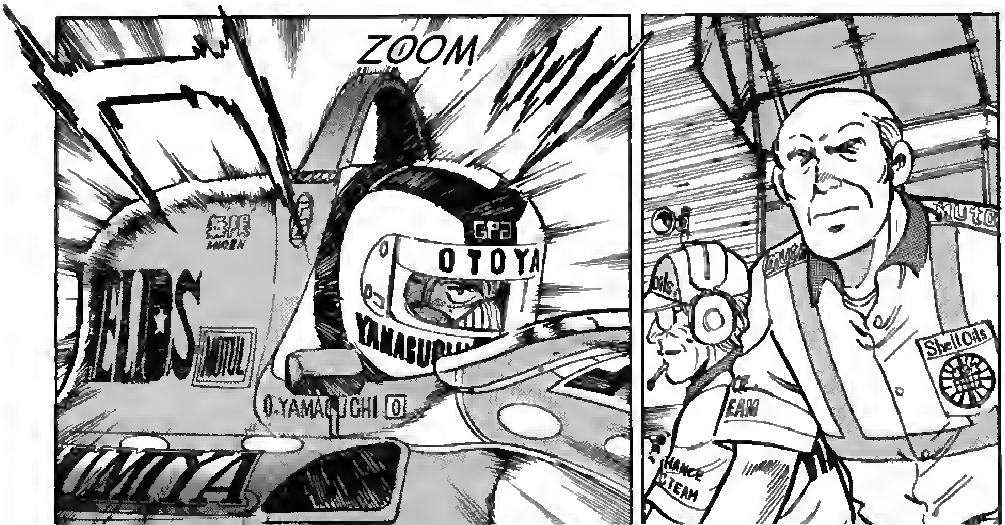
BP
BP
GIT
At last! This year's final race for championship of the European F3000...
BRAAAAH
...the Nogaro Grand Prix! We're still on the first lap. Who will be the first to clear the final corner?

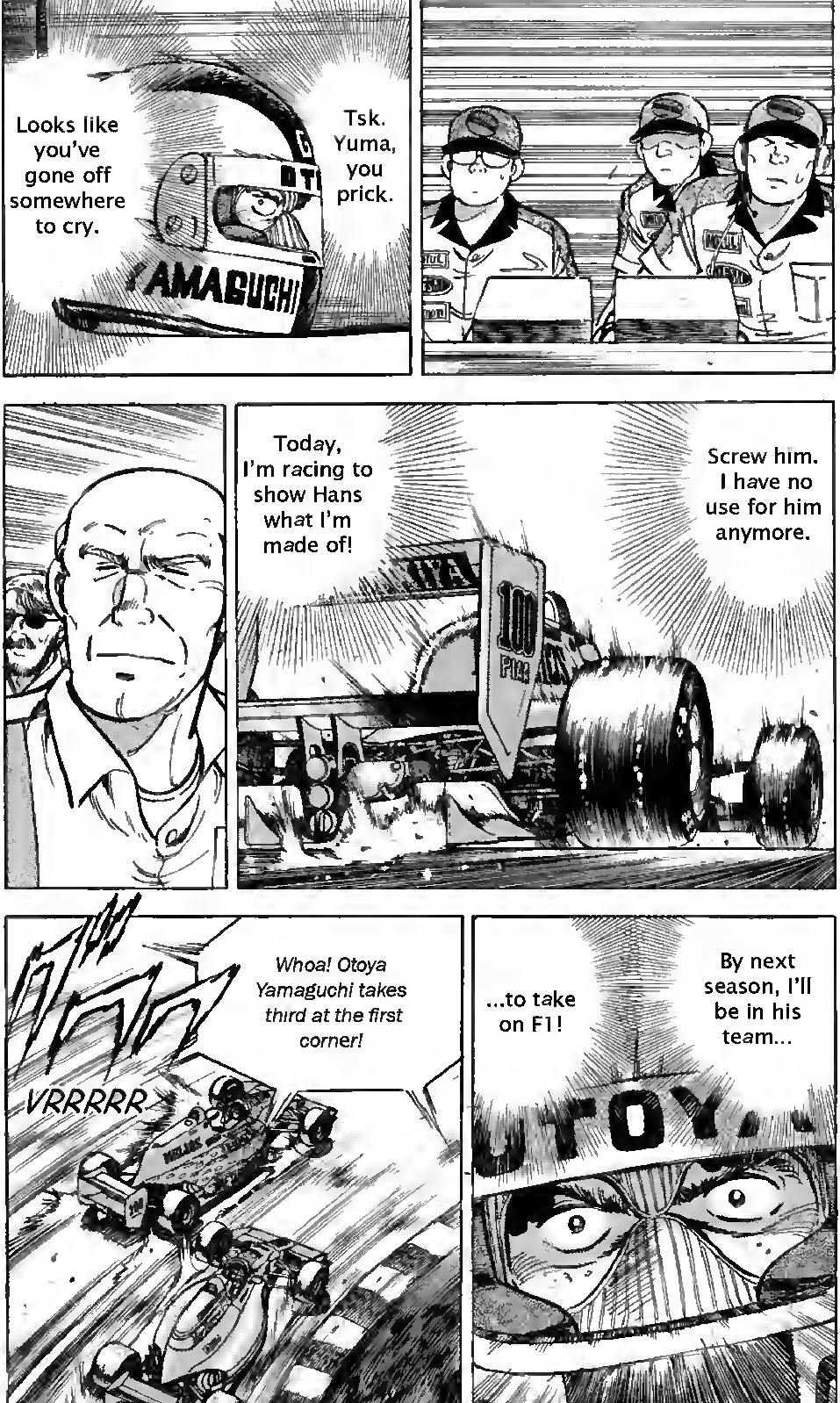
Aaand it's none other than No. 38, Gunma Akagi, who started in pole position after qualifying with the fastest times in both days of the preliminary!

How long can I take this?
SHUDDER
SHUDDER
And in second is...
SHUDDER
SHUDDER
SHUDDER
He got off to a slow start, but afterwards went straight for second...
...and now, at the end of the first lap, he's already taken back the lead!

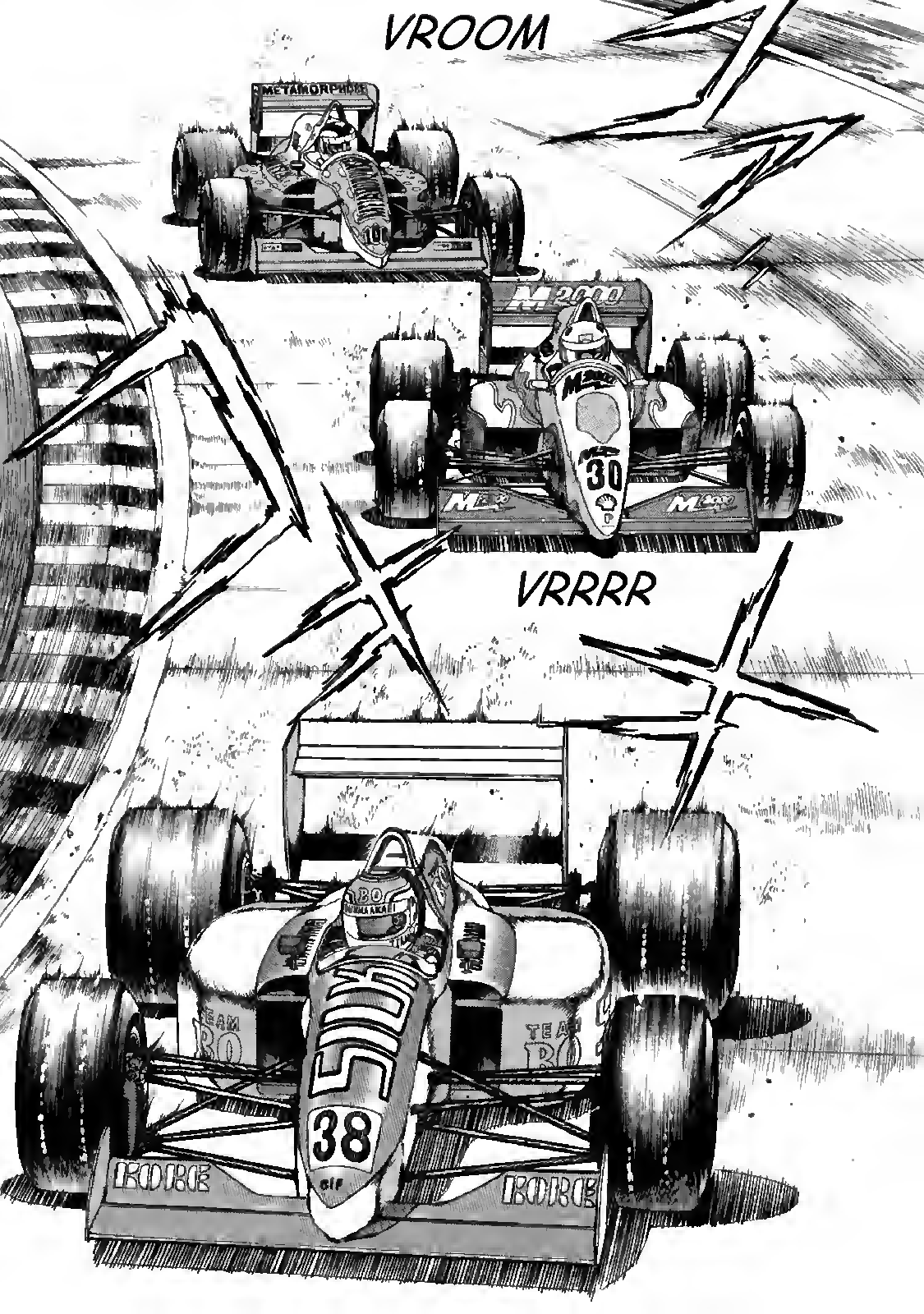

FWOOSH
How long can I watch you tear through the circuit?
TEAM
BO
SILK

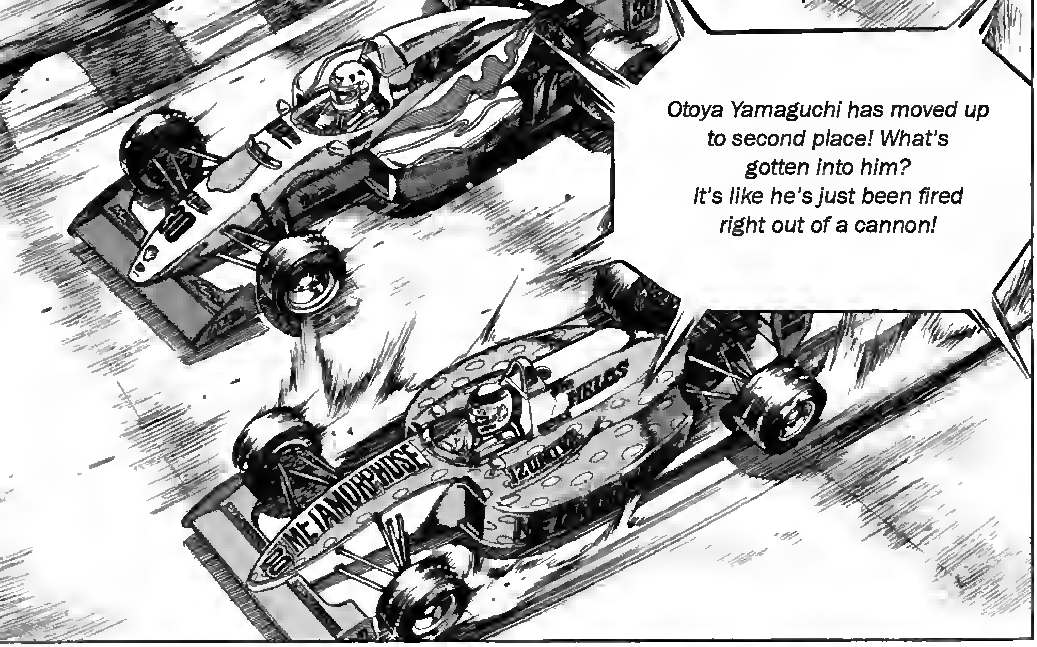

In fourth is car No.100, Otoya Yamaguchi. He started fourth on grid, and has kept his position thus far!
100


ZOOM
GPA
OTOYA
Shell Oils

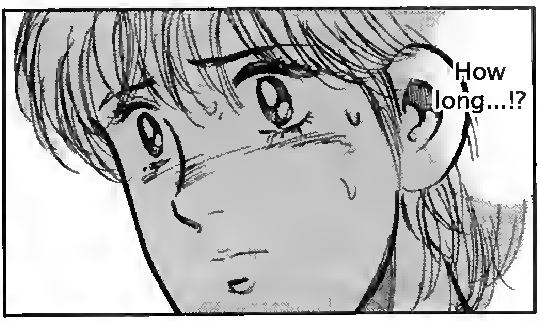

Looks like you've gone off somewhere to cry.
Tsk. Yuma, you prick.
YAMAGUCHI
Today, I'm racing to show Hans what I'm made of!
Screw him. I have no use for him anymore.
100
VRRRRR
Whoa! Otoya Yamaguchi takes third at the first corner!
...to take on F1!
By next season, I'll be in his team...
TOYA

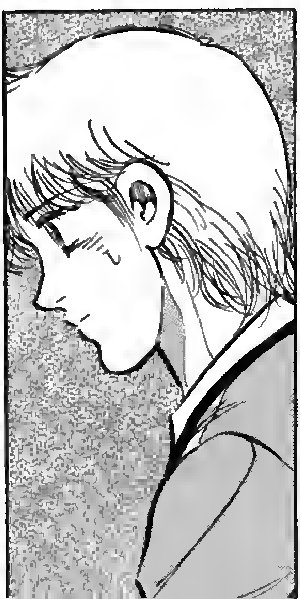
VROOM
Where are you, Gunma? I'm about to zip right past you!
VREEEHH
And I'm takin' the trophy with me straight to F1!
All right! I'm gonna take first!
IZUMIYA
100


VROOM
METAMORPHOSE
10
M2000
30
VRRRR
38
BOBCE
BOBCE


Otoya Yamaguchi has moved up to second place! What's gotten into him? It's like he's just been fired right out of a cannon!
METAMORPHOSE

AKAI
10


How long...!?



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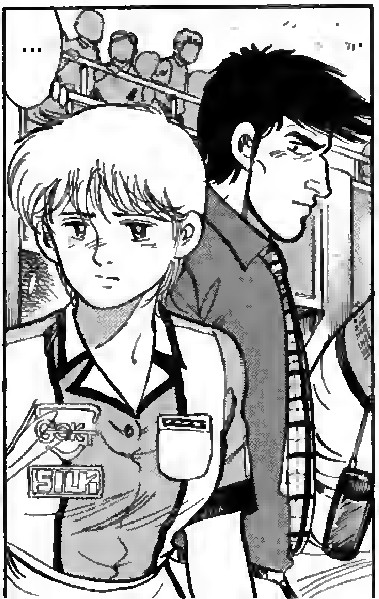
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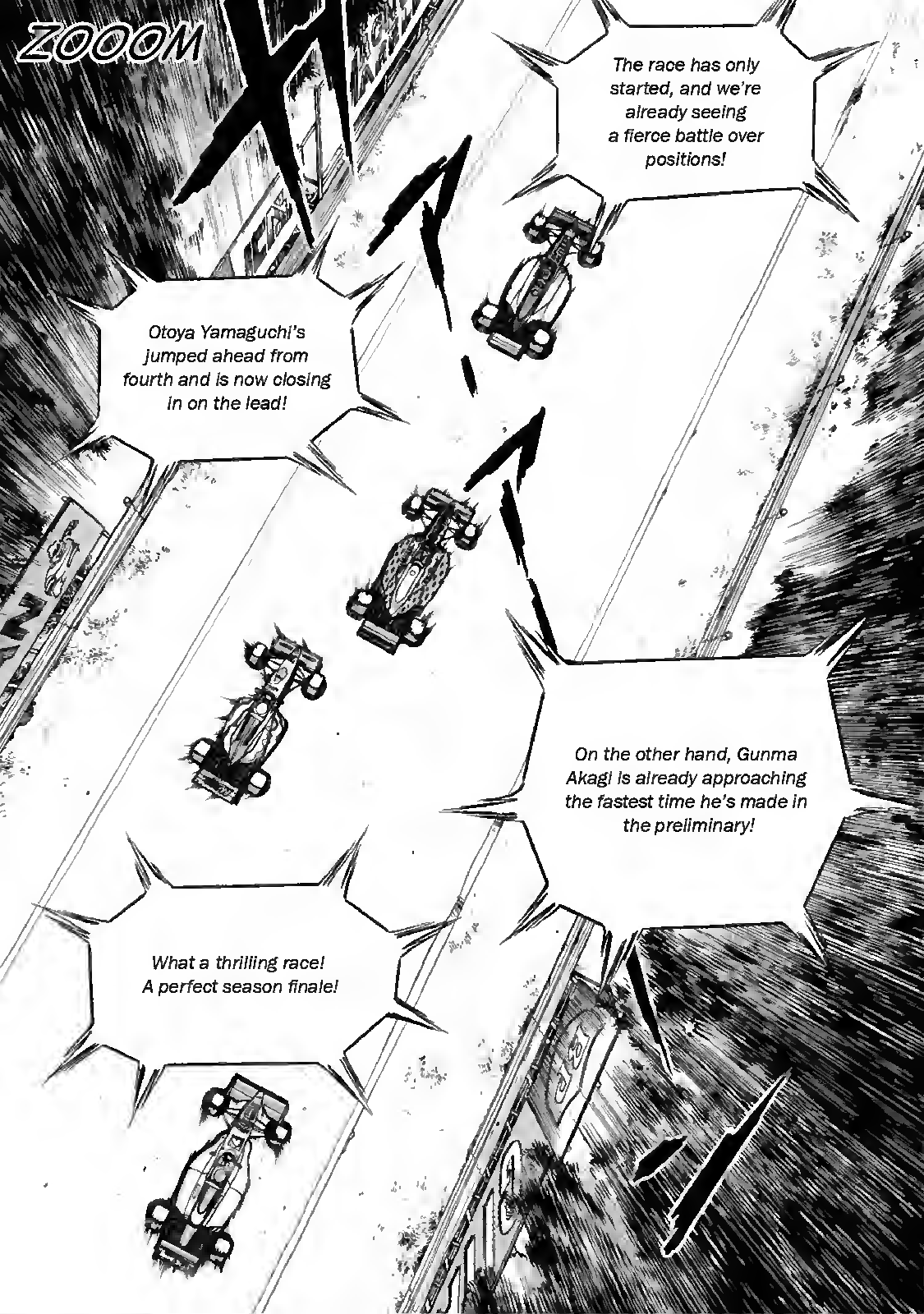
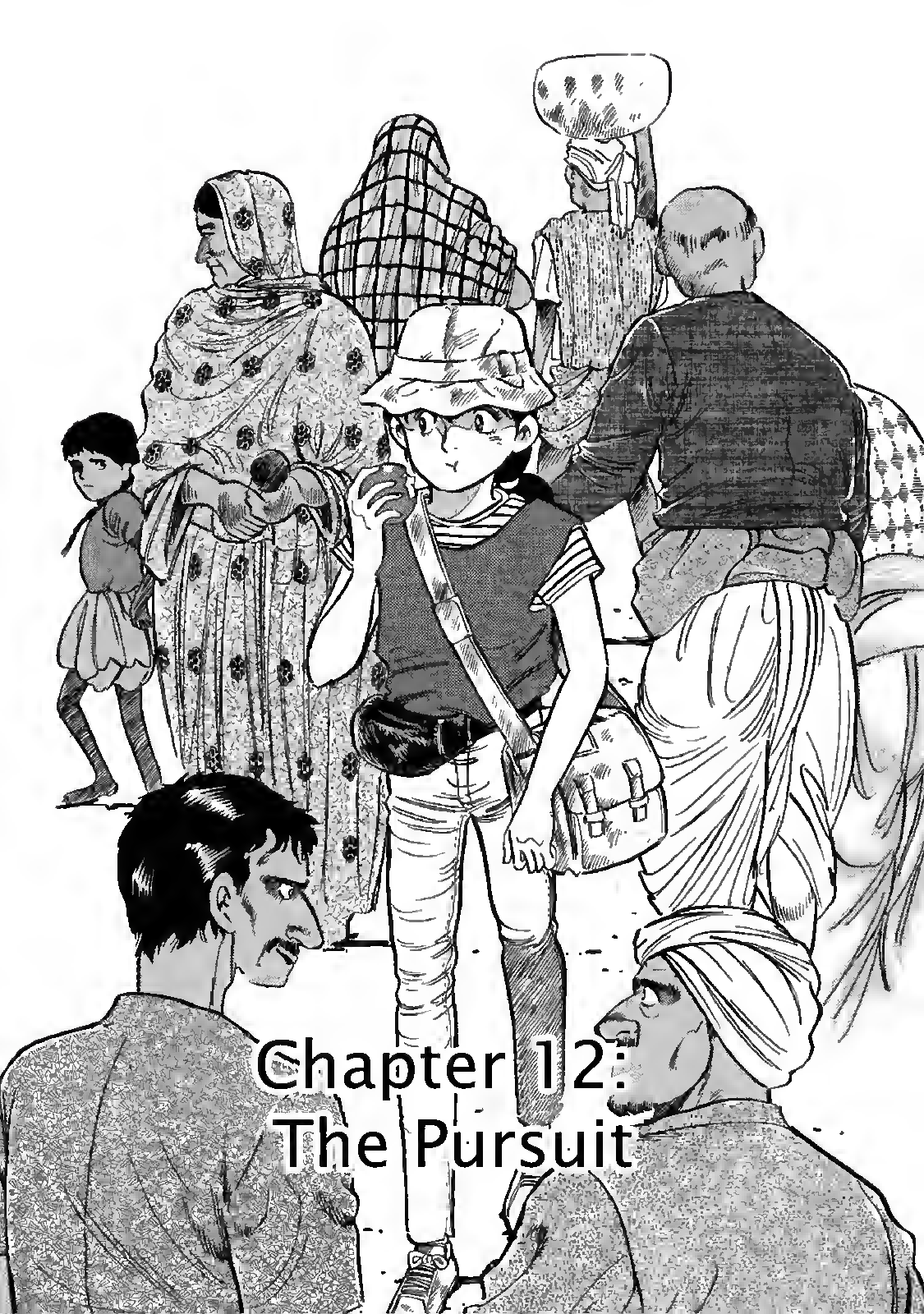

ZOOOM
The race has only started, and we're already seeing a fierce battle over positions!
Otoya Yamaguchi's jumped ahead from fourth and is now closing in on the lead!
On the other hand, Gunma Akagi is already approaching the fastest time he's made in the preliminary!
What a thrilling race! A perfect season finale!



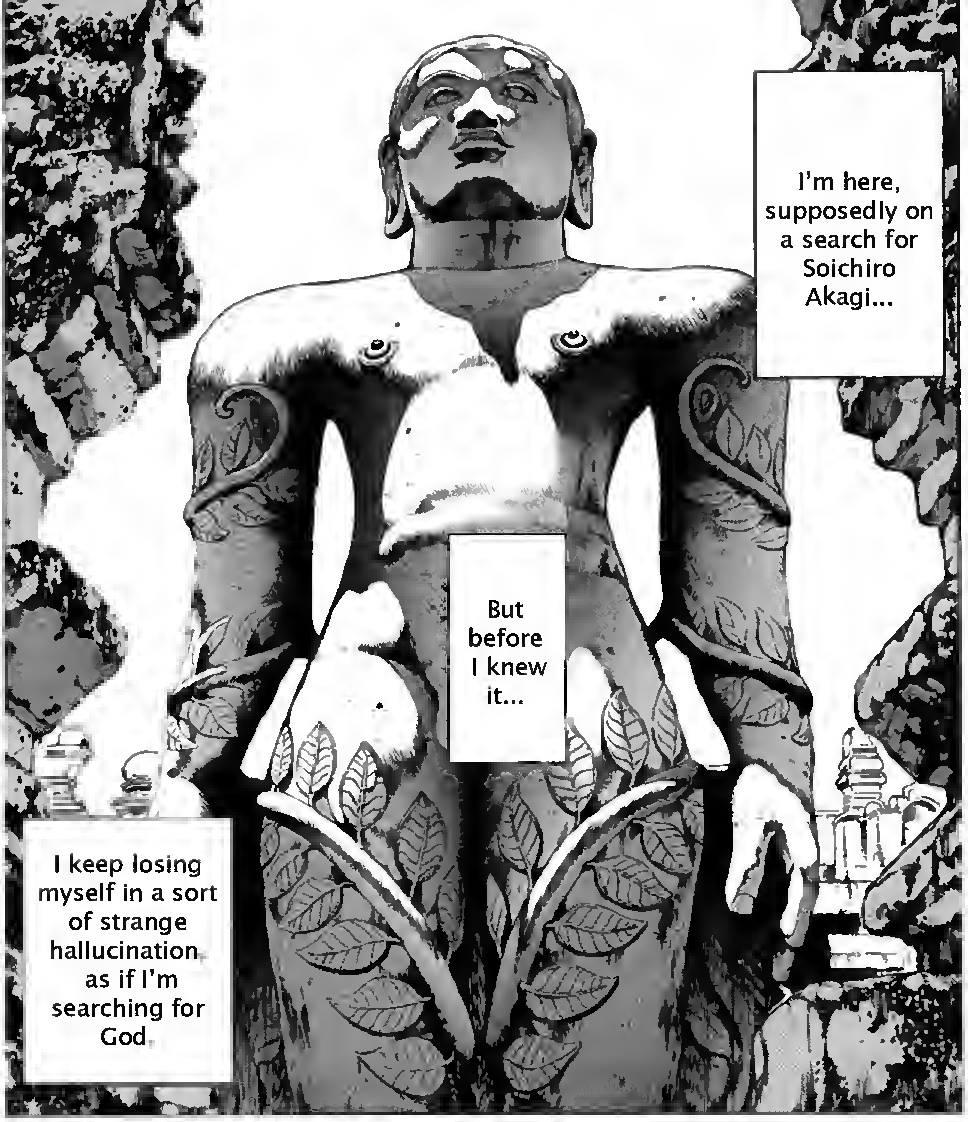
Chapter 12: The Pursuit

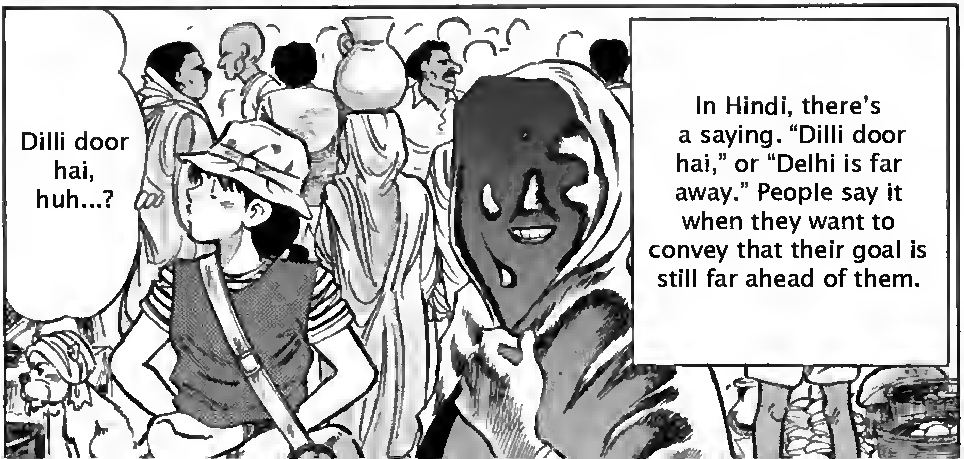
ORION
DIANA
TEXAN
BON
M. G.
CO_2
ENAC
PENS BALL PENS
Delhi

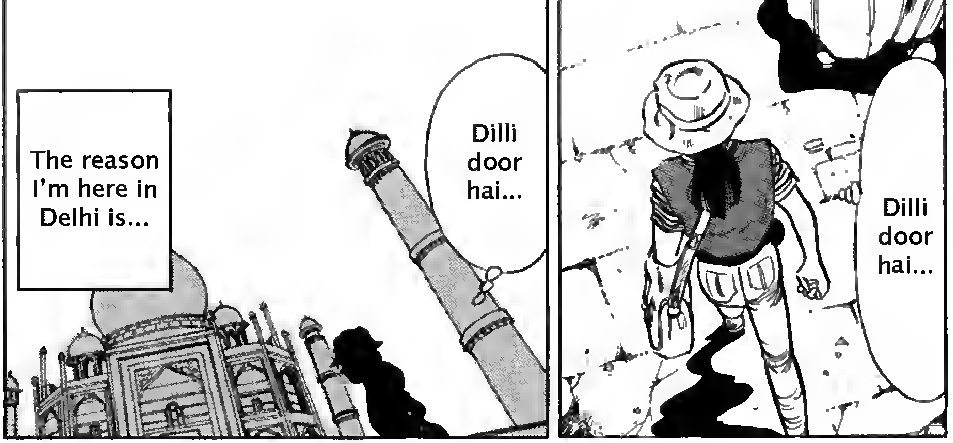
As I was traveling in search of your father, one day I found myself here.
"Dear Mr. Shoma Akagi, I am writing to you from India."

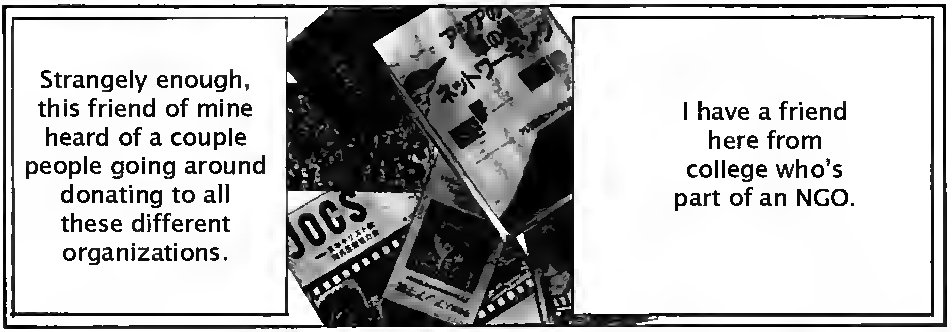
I find myself being enveloped by very mysterious feelings.
On the third day of my stay here in the country's capital...

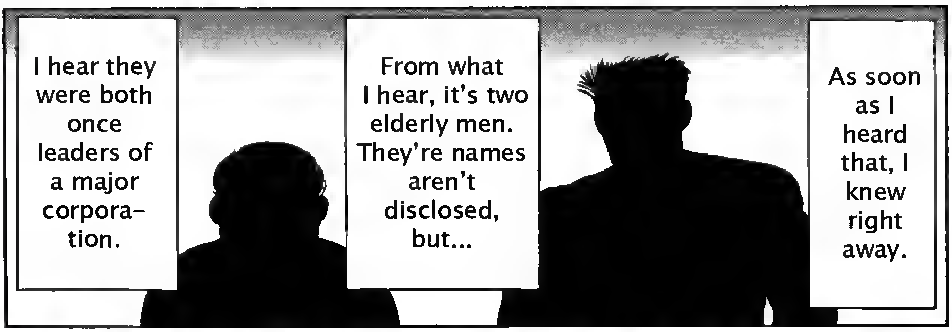
It's difficult to put into words, but...
गंगा सेवा
YAK
YAK
Maybe it's the peculiar atmosphere of the land that's making me feel this way.


I keep losing myself in a sort of strange hallucination, as if I'm searching for God.
But before I knew it...
I'm here, supposedly on a search for Soichiro Akagi...


Dilli door hai, huh...?
In Hindi, there's a saying. "Dilli door hai," or "Delhi is far away." People say it when they want to convey that their goal is still far ahead of them.


The reason I'm here in Delhi is...
Dilli door hai...
Dilli door hai...

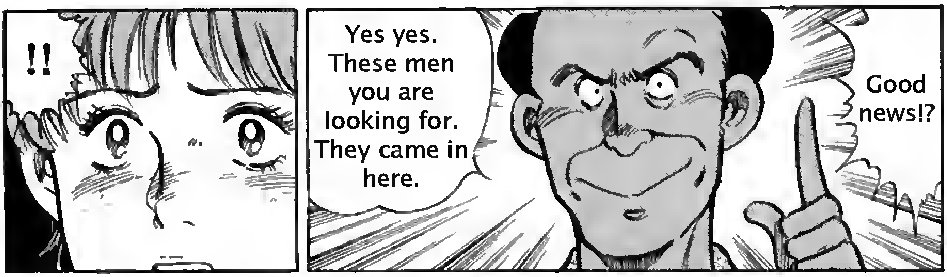

Strangely enough, this friend of mine heard of a couple people going around donating to all these different organizations.
I have a friend here from college who's part of an NGO.

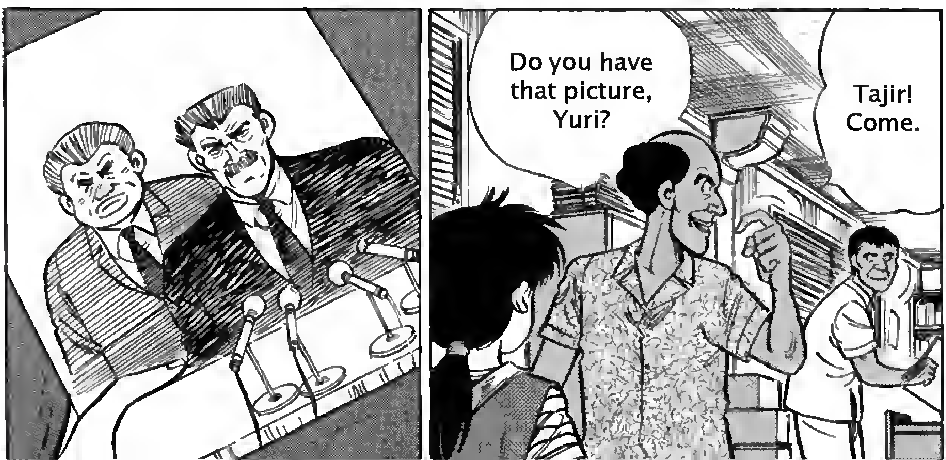

I hear they were both once leaders of a major corpora-tion.
From what I hear, it's two elderly men. They're names aren't disclosed, but...
As soon as I heard that, I knew right away.

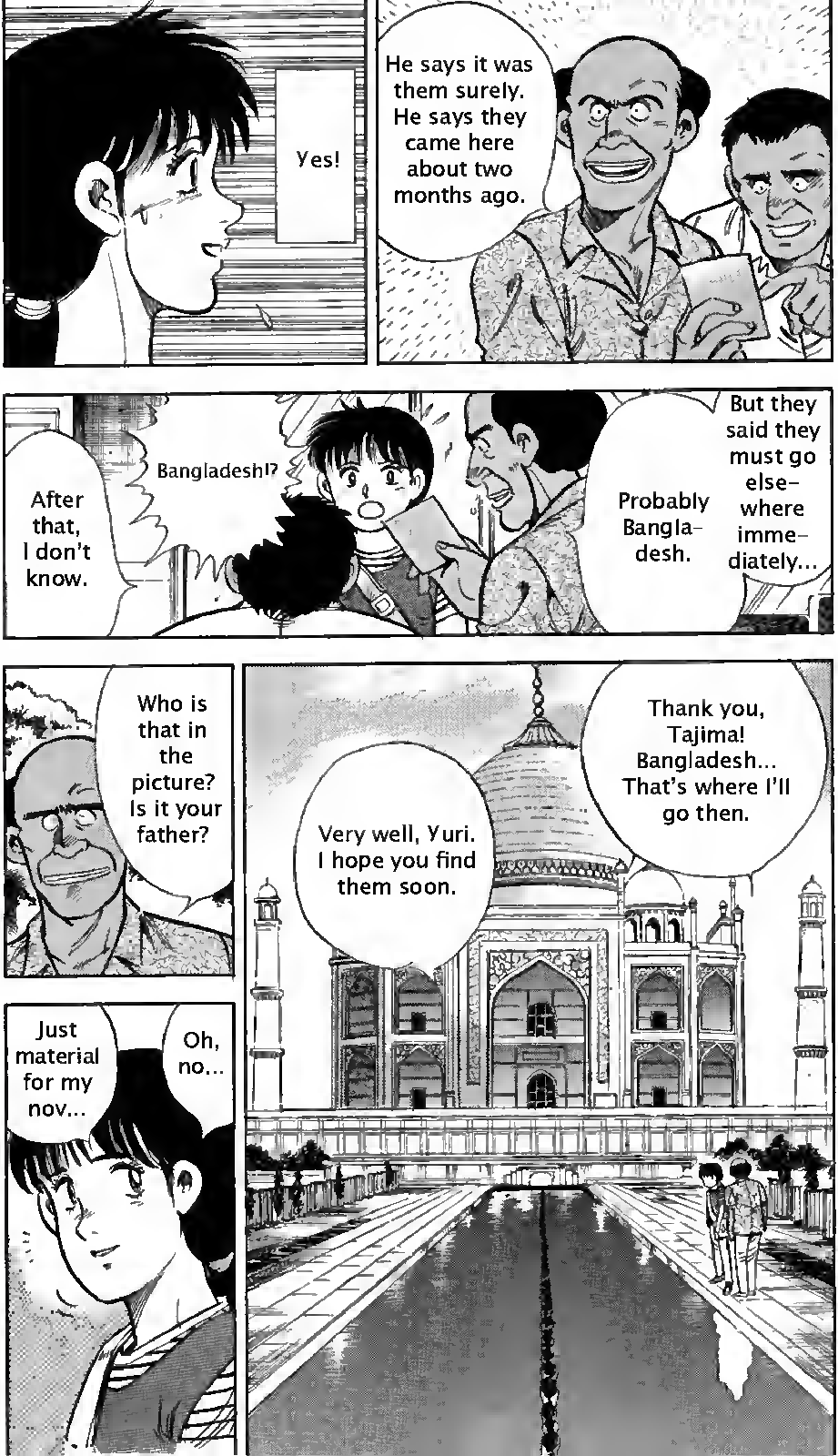
Delhi isn't so far!
What do you think, Shoma? Do you think I'm on to something here?

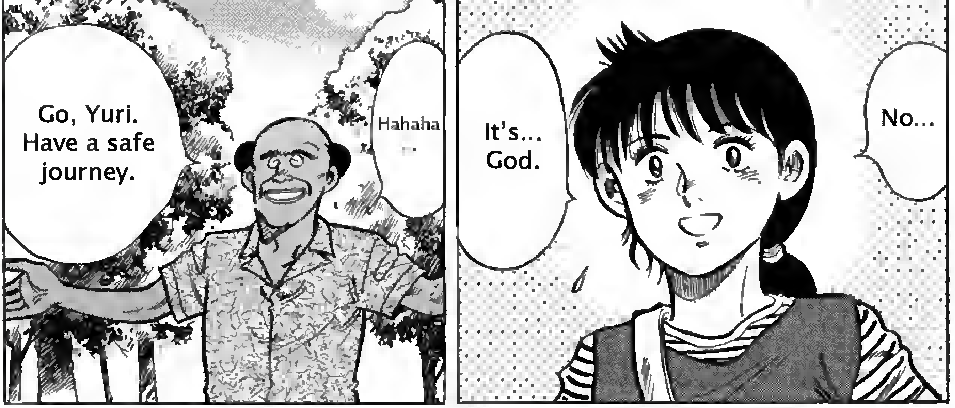
Oh, right... Sorry, let me get you a cold drink.
Ugh. Come on Tajima.
KACHUK
FWOOO
Oh, hello Yuri! You came back.

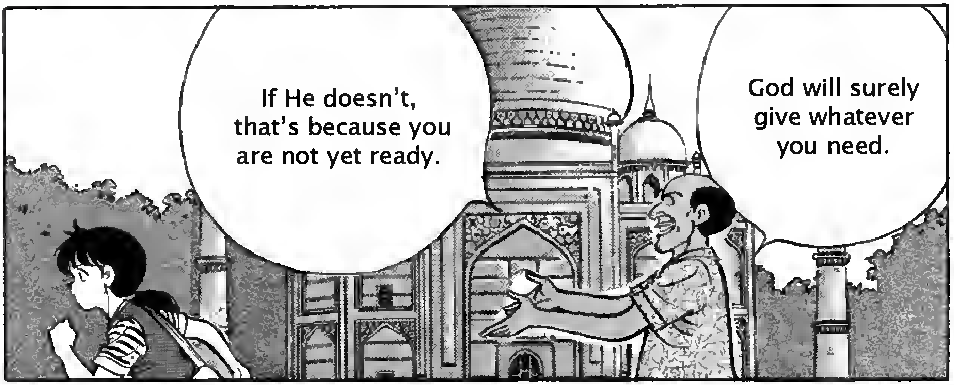
No no. I said good noose!
Noose ...!?
POP
I have some good noose.


!!
Yes yes. These men you are looking for. They came in here.
Good news!?


Do you have that picture, Yuri?
Tajir! Come.

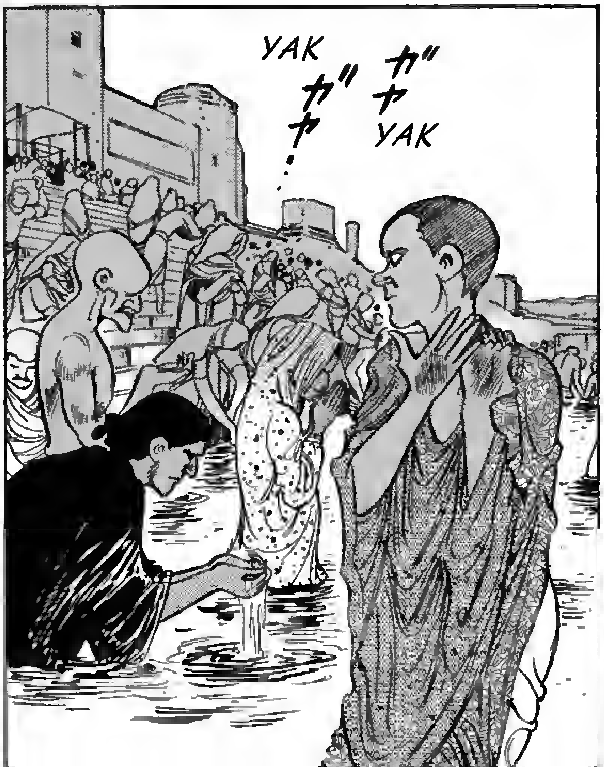

Yes!
He says it was them surely. He says they came here about two months ago.
Bangladesh!?
After that, I don't know.
Probably Bangla-desh.
But they said they must go else-where imme-diately...
Who is that in the picture? Is it your father?
Very well, Yuri. I hope you find them soon.
Thank you, Tajima! Bangladesh... That's where I'll go then.
Just material for my nov...
Oh, no...


Go, Yuri. Have a safe journey.
Hahaha...
It's... God.
No...

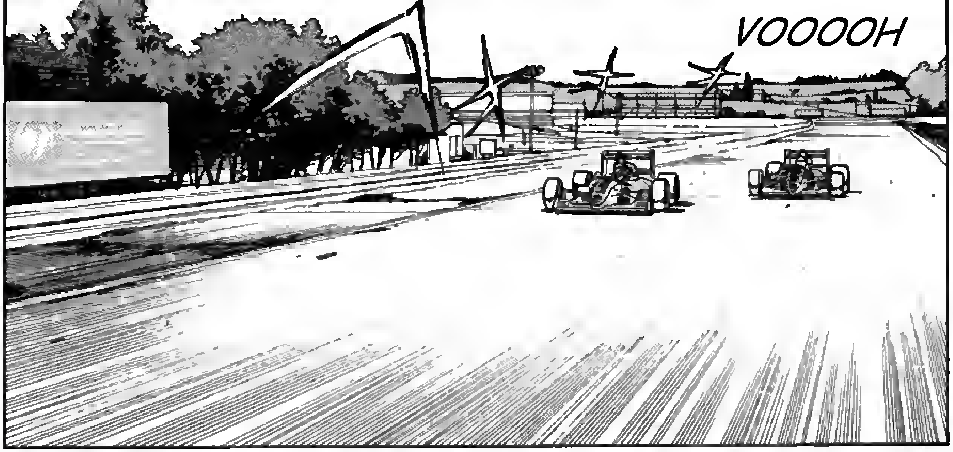

If He doesn't, that's because you are not yet ready.
God will surely give whatever you need.

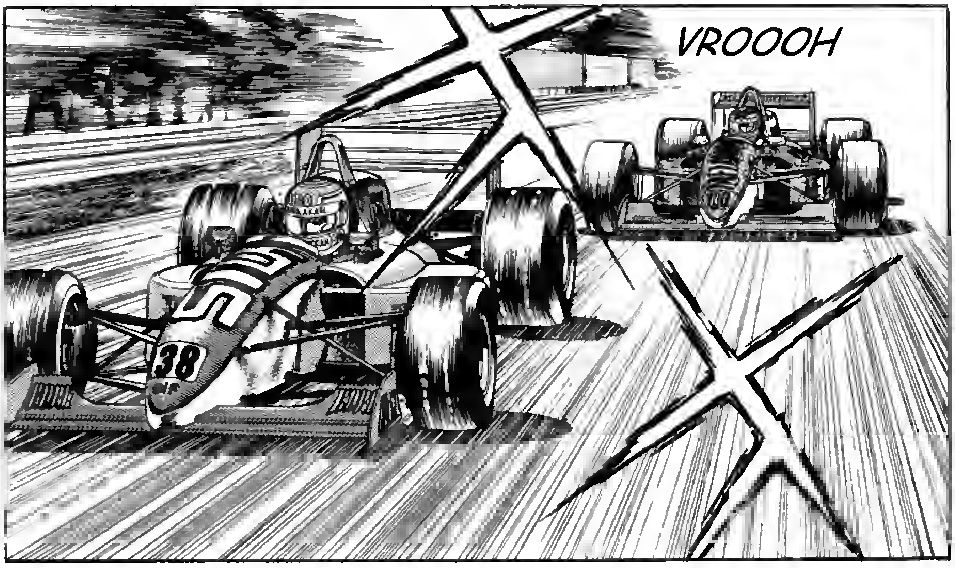
...

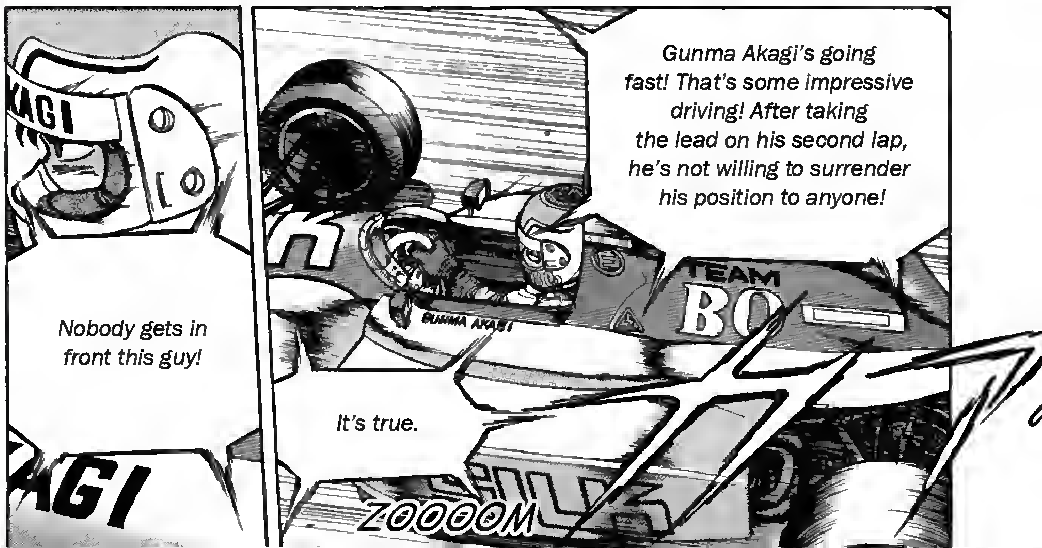
SPLASH

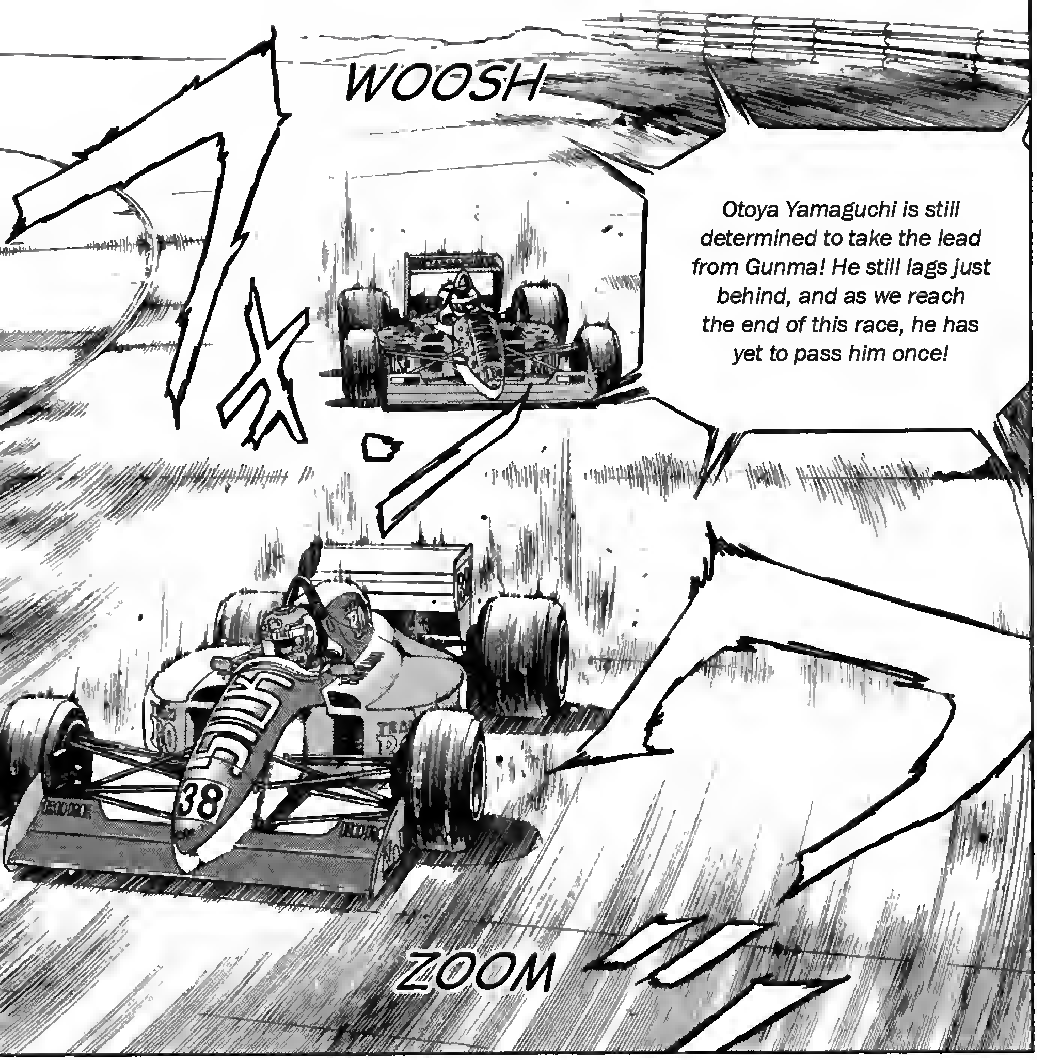

YAK
YAK

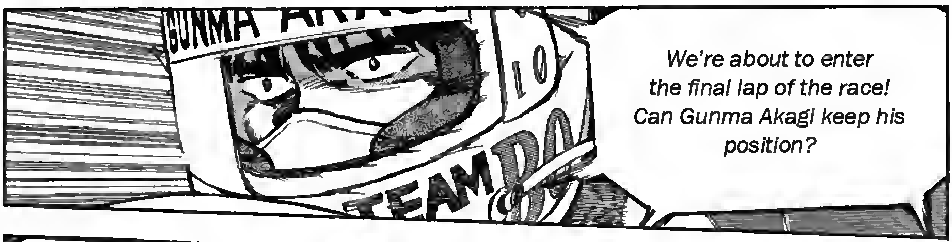
I'm
going...!

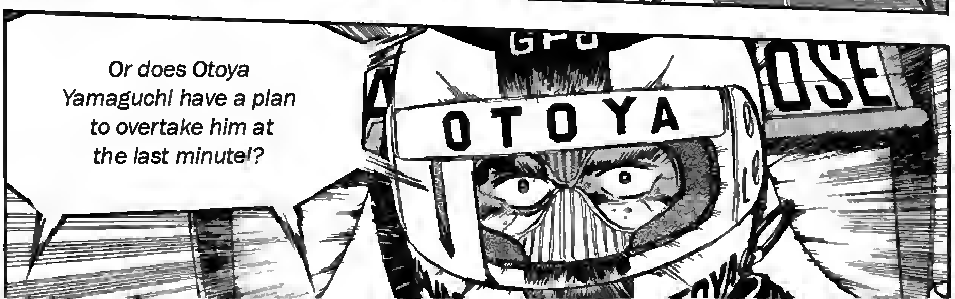

VOOOOH


VROOOH
38

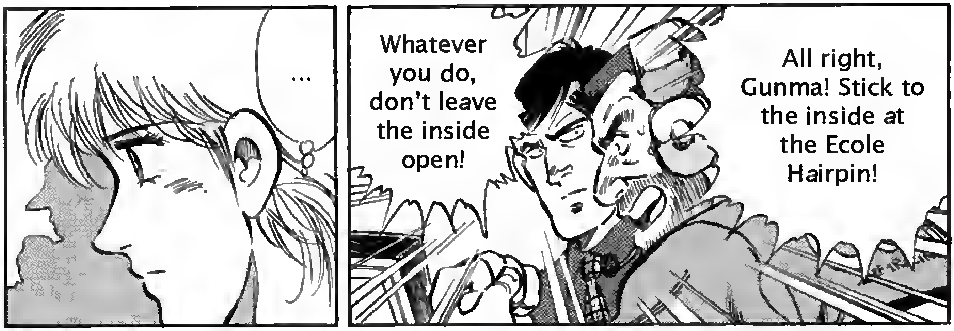

AGI
Nobody gets in front this guy!
AGI
Gunma Akagi's going fast! That's some impressive driving! After taking the lead on his second lap, he's not willing to surrender his position to anyone!
TEAM
BO
GUNMA AKAGI
It's true.
ZOOOOM

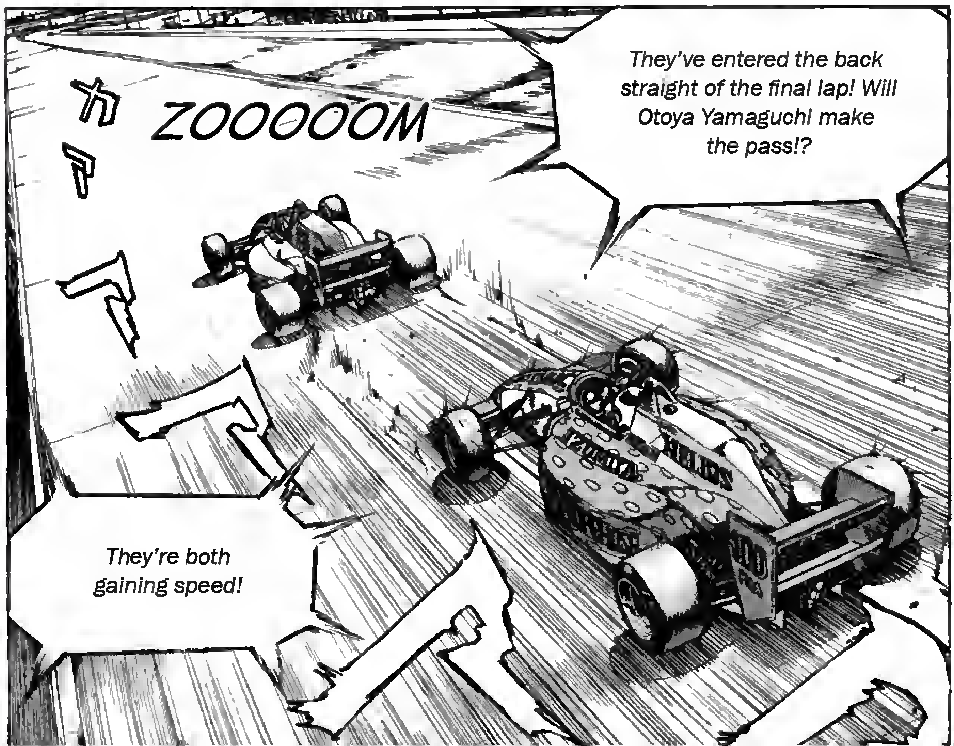

WOOSH
Otoya Yamaguchi is still determined to take the lead from Gunma! He still lags just behind, and as we reach the end of this race, he has yet to pass him once!
38
ZOOM

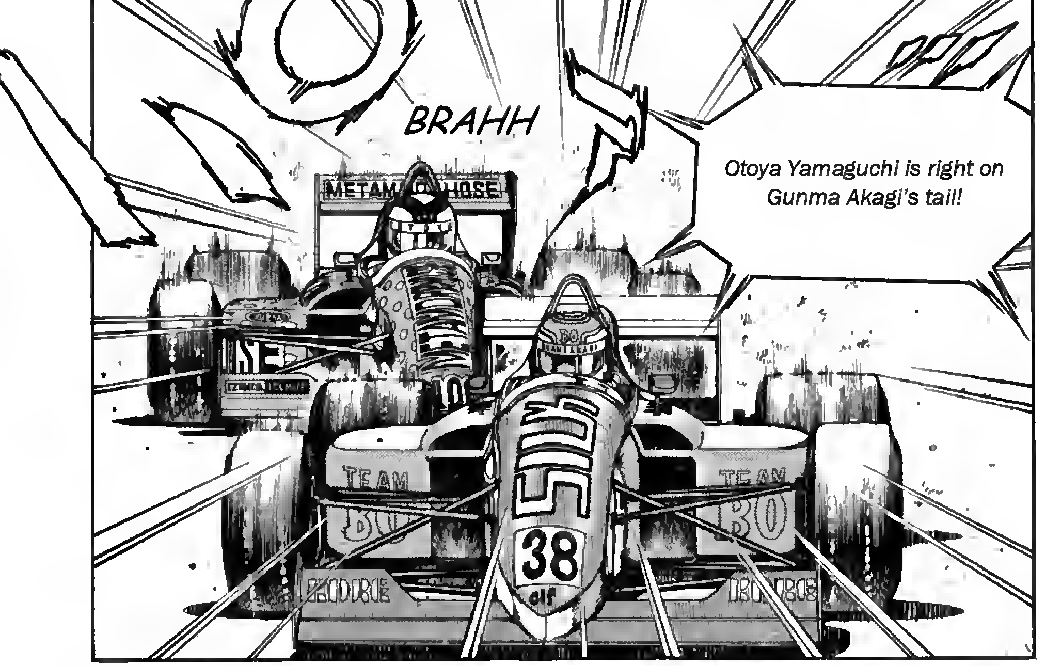

GUNMA
10
We're about to enter the final lap of the race! Can Gunma Akagi keep his position?


Or does Otoya Yamaguchi have a plan to overtake him at the last minute!?
OTOYA
10

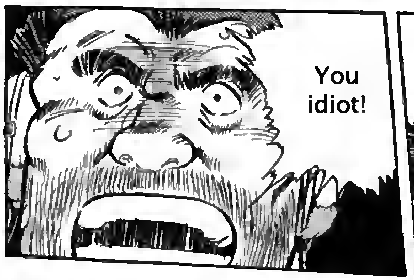
He won't hit the brakes until the last possible second.
If he does make a move, it'll be at the Epingle de Ecole at the end of the back straight.
Watch it, Gunma. Otoya's gonna make his move at the very end!


...
Whatever you do, don't leave the inside open!
All right, Gunma! Stick to the inside at the Ecole Hairpin!

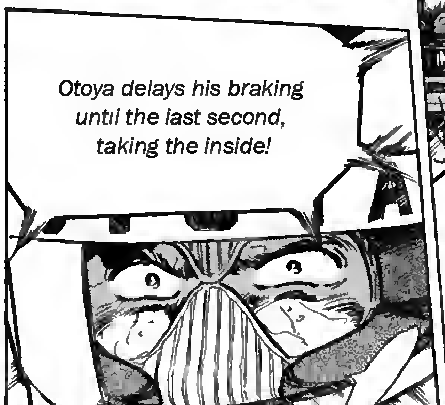

ZOOOOOM
They've entered the back straight of the final lap! Will Otoya Yamaguchi make the pass!?
They're both gaining speed!

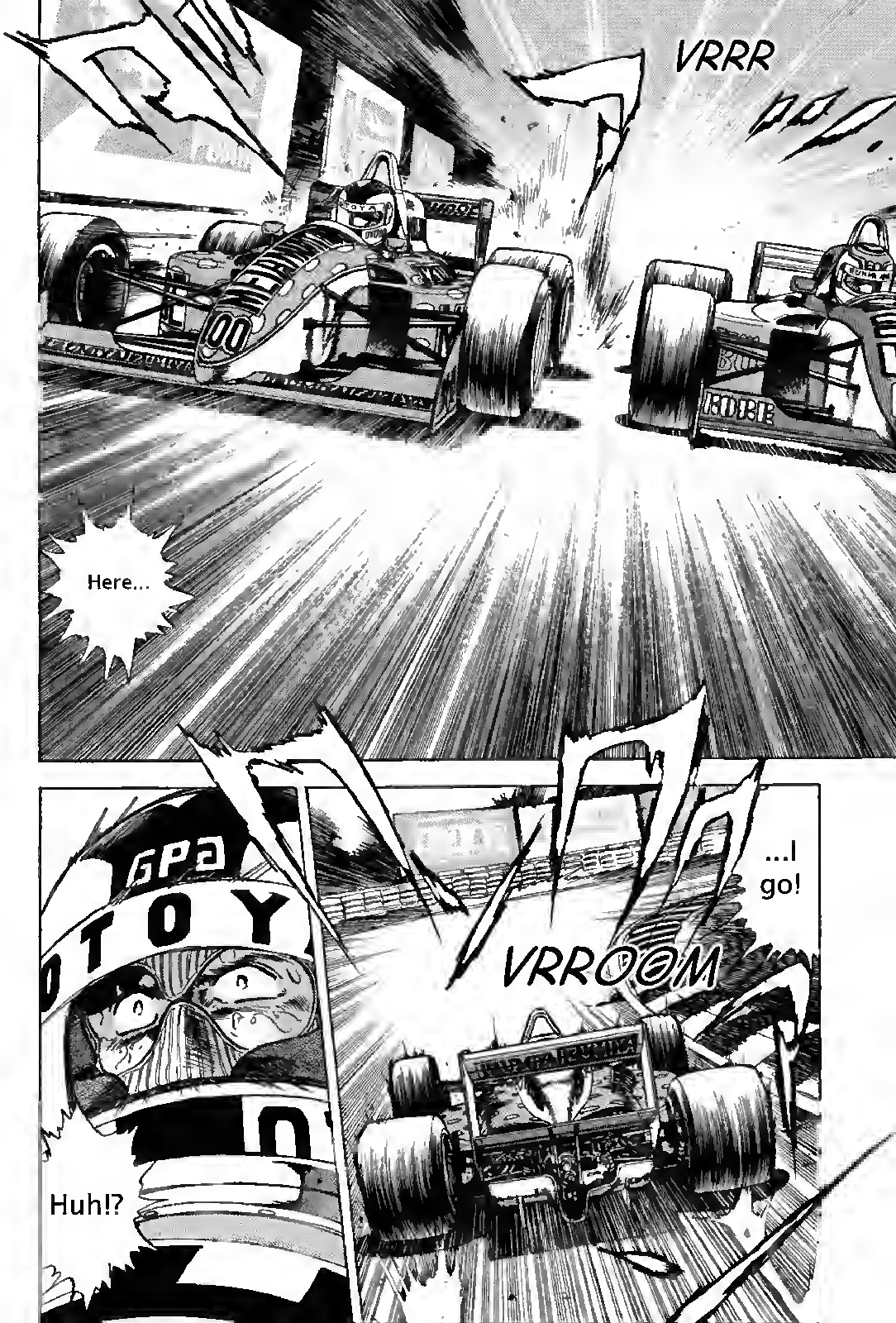

BRAHH
Otoya Yamaguchi is right on Gunma Akagi's tail!
38

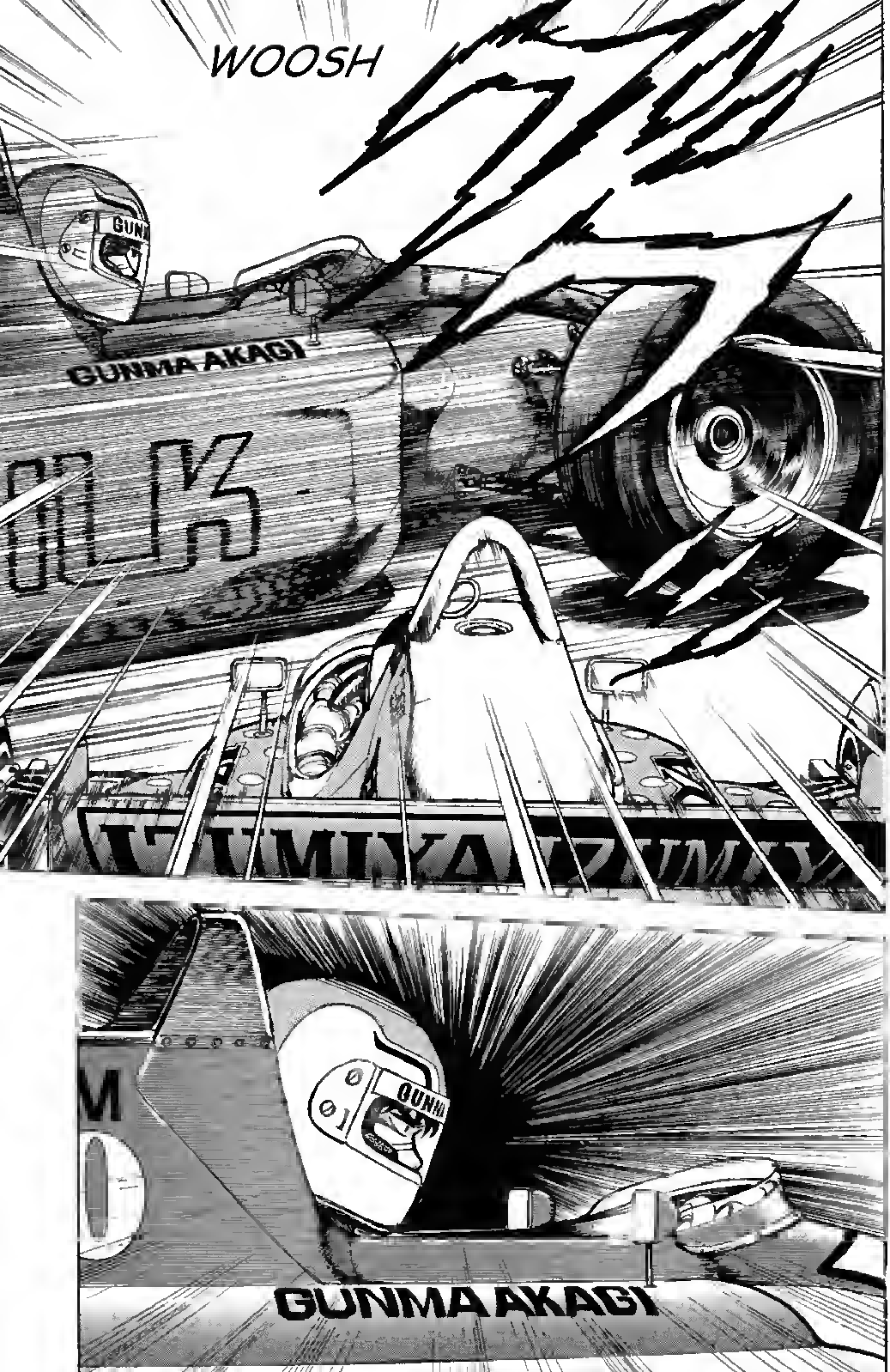
They're closing in on the hairpin!
ZOOM


You idiot!

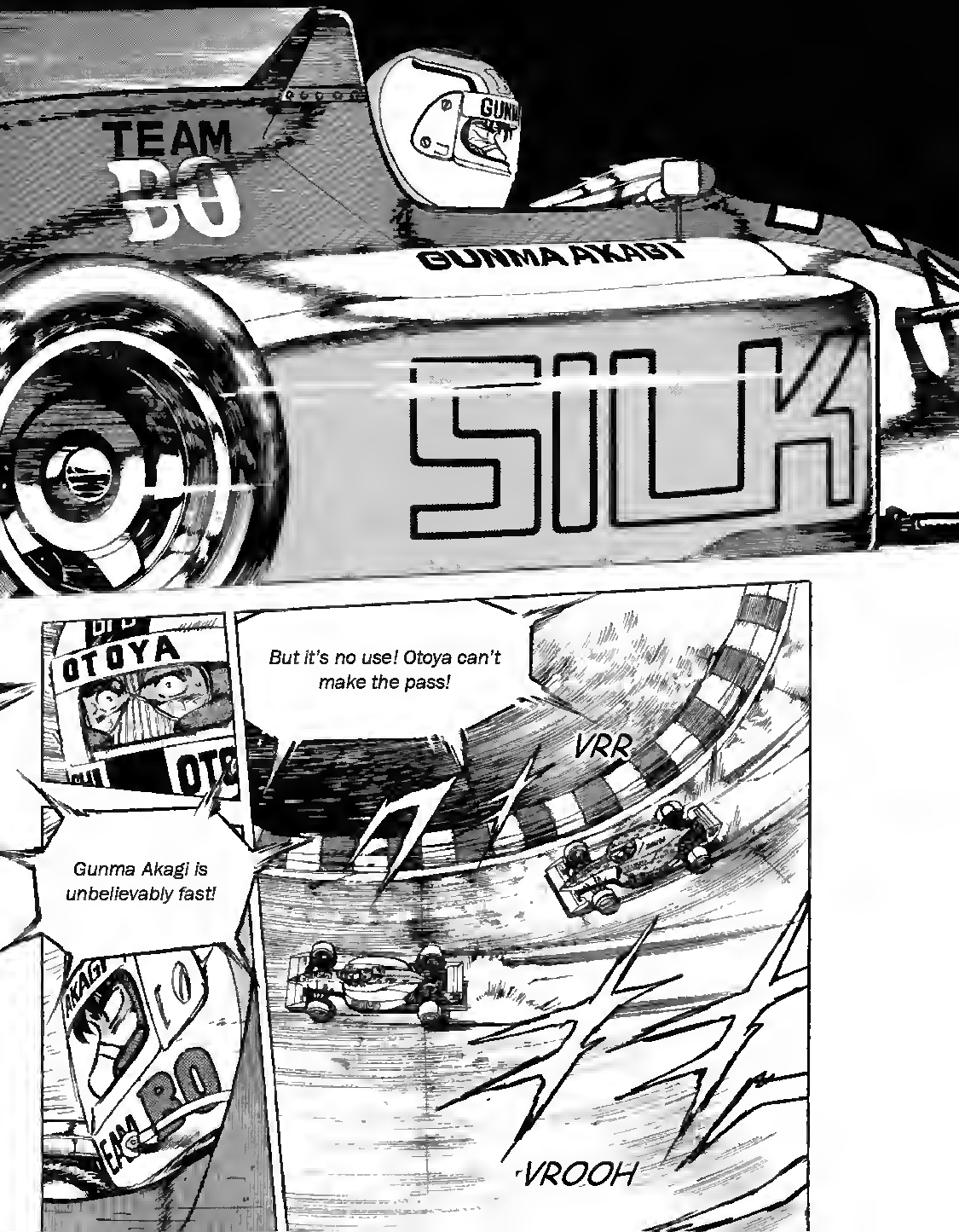
Whoa! Gunma gives in and thrusts his car towards the outside!
This is not good for Gunma!
38

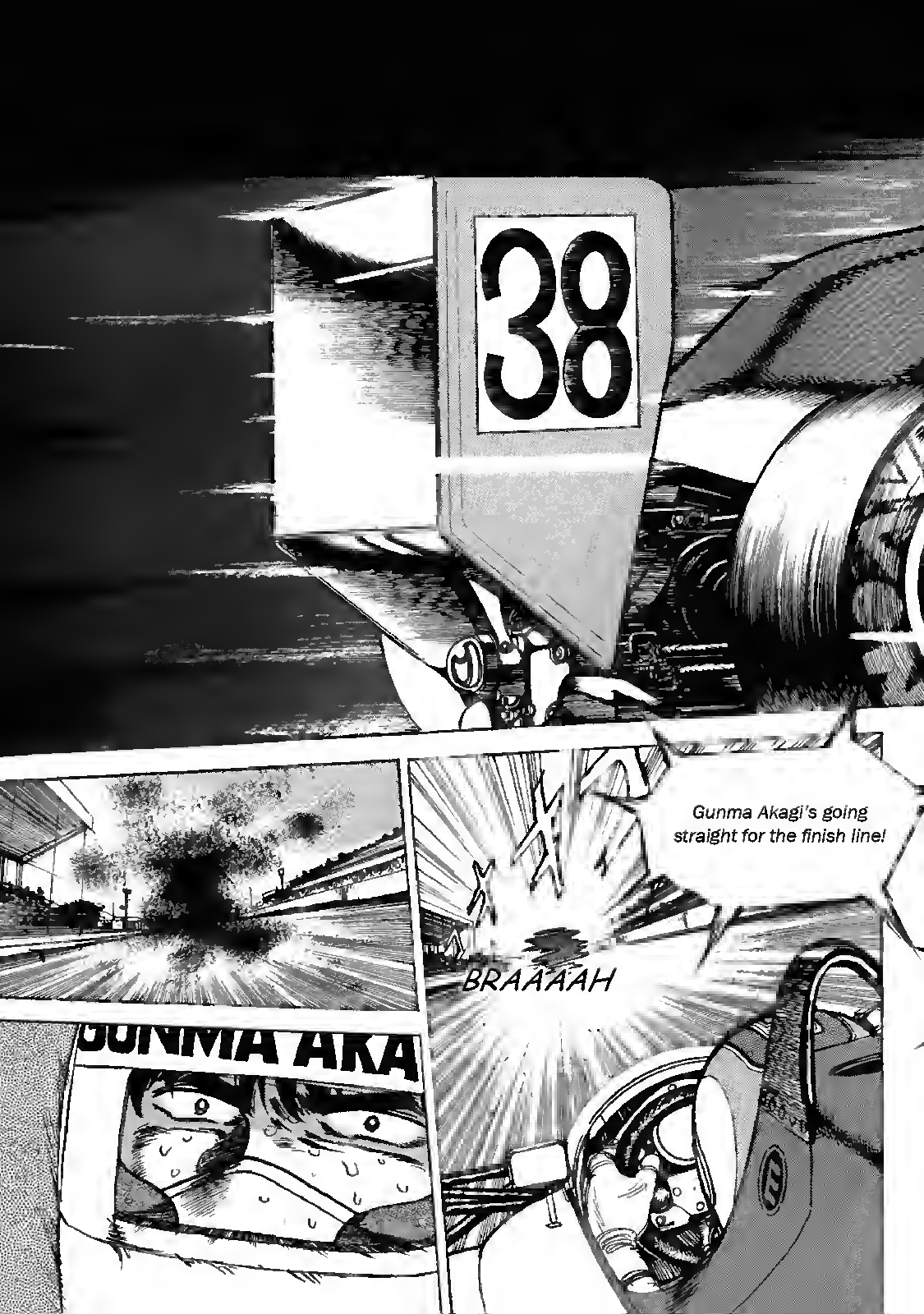

Otoya delays his braking until the last second, taking the inside!

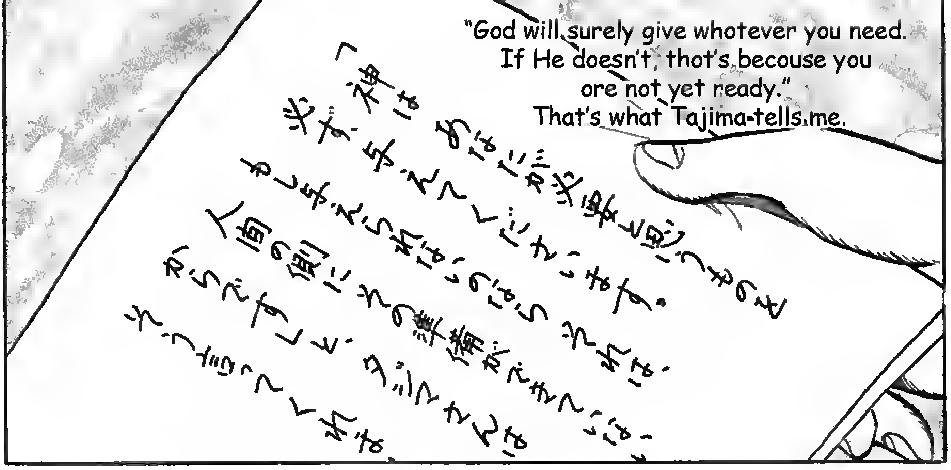

VRRR
Here...
...I go!
VRROOM
GP2
TOY
Huh!?


WOOSH
GUNMA AKAGI
GUNMA AKAGI

38
TEAM
BU
GUNMA AKAGI
SILK
GUNMA AKA
BRAAAAH
Gunma Akagi's going straight for the finish line!
OTOYA
Gunma Akagi is unbelievably fast!
But it's no use! Otoya can't make the pass!
VRR
VROOH


TEAM
GUNMA AKAGI
SILK
OTOYA
But it's no use! Otoya can't make the pass!
VRR
Gunma Akagi is unbelievably fast!
AKAGI
VROOH


38
Gunma Akagi's going straight for the finish line!
BRAAAAH
GUNMA AKA


"God will surely give whotever you need.
If He doesn't, thot's becouse you
ore not yet ready."
That's what Tajima-tells me.

P.S.
Dilli
door
hai...?

"...when
I get
there.
-Yuri
Toyota"
I'm going to
go to
Bangladesh.
I'll be in touch
again...

...
"F" Volume 24 THE END

F VOL.24

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